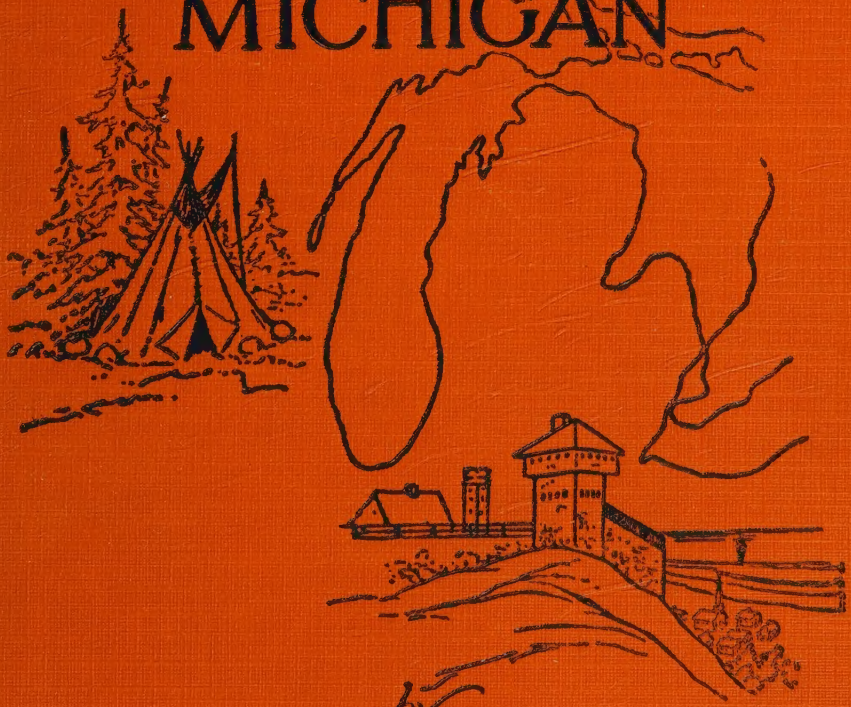
HEROES *and* HERO TALES *of* MICHIGAN



by

R. CLYDE FORD

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Heroes and Hero Tales *of* Michigan

By

R. Clyde Ford

Author of

SANDY MACDONALD'S MAN

E. M. Hale and Company, *Publishers*

Milwaukee, Wis. Columbus, Ohio

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Dedicated To

DANIEL FORD AND RICHARD FLOYD
MY PIONEER GRANDFATHERS
WHO HELPED CARVE OUT MICHIGAN,
THE STATE, WITH THEIR AXES

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ALMA, MICHIGAN

Preface

IN making this collection of tales of the brave old days, I have had a desire to help youthful readers to a better acquaintance with some of the great characters and events in our long history. They do not have to go to the records of exploration and conquest in other lands to find heroism and achievement; we have had them both in the making of Michigan. The last hundred and thirty years have been especially fruitful in great personages and great events.

I am led to hope the boys and girls of the state will find delight in these sketches because of the number of letters that came to me from the youthful readers of "Sandy MacDonald's Man" who were eager to know more about the early days. If I am not mistaken in such expressions of enthusiasm, then what this little volume contains will be of interest. As they review the past in these Hero Tales they will have another glance of Michigan emerging from the wilderness.

Ypsilanti, Michigan
September 1, 1930

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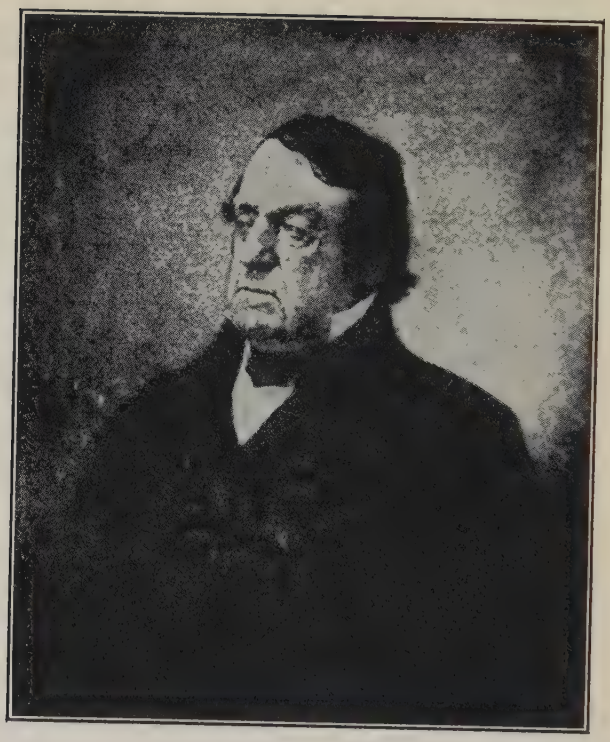


Lewis Cass

LEWIS CASS
Soldier, Governor, Statesman

Chapter One

FATHER MARQUETTE

Explorer and Missionary

1637-1675

A GOOD many travelers who cross Michigan in the fine trains of the Pere Marquette Railway system, and maybe some of the good citizens of the handsome city of Marquette on the edge of Lake Superior, wonder about the name. Why Marquette? And above all, why the Pere? The coming of the name to Michigan is an interesting story and belongs in the chapter of our early history.

In the month of May, 1673, a bark canoe, urged on by two French Canadian paddlers, was moving slowly up the east coast of Lake Michigan. A third man, a sick man and a priest, was in the canoe. The little company passed along off-shore from the great dunes which always have a wild beauty of their own in the fresh springtime. Now and then an eagle sitting on the topmost branch of some sand-blighted tree screamed a rude greeting to them. The canoe kept on its way from one rude

camp to another thirty or forty miles each day. The young priest, too ill to help with the paddling, murmured his prayers, kept up the spirits of his companions, and now and then let his thoughts wander far beyond the dunes and the enveloping forest, far beyond the Great Lakes and Quebec and New France, to a little city in Old France, his birthplace, which towers from a rock above the plain. Only seven years since he saw its beautiful Church of Our Lady, and now he was dying in the wilderness and his life's work was ended!

On the 18th of May the little party reached the river and sandy bluffs of what is now Ludington. The sick man could go no farther. His devoted companions carried him ashore and laid him by a fire under a shelter of branches. He was failing rapidly. Three hours later his men were wakened by his call. He asked to look once more upon the crucifix, then with the word "Jesus" upon his lips, as became a faithful member of the Order of Jesus, he closed his eyes and died.

But let us now tell the whole story.

Some ninety miles east of Paris in France is the quaint old city of Laon (pronounced *Lon,* n nasal), the home of the Marquette family. Many men of that name have been famous.

They have fought for good causes and lost causes, for kings and against kings, and some of them came to America with Lafayette to war for liberty in our Revolution. But Jacques Marquette, born there in 1637, was the most famous. He received a good education, became a priest of the Jesuit order, and eagerly longed to do work for his faith in the New World. He arrived in Quebec, September 7, 1666. He was twenty-nine years old.

In 1668 we find Père, or Father, Marquette at the "Soo," the Sault de Sainte Marie, in charge of the Ottawa mission. But his superior did not keep him there. The following year he was moved on to La Pointe du Saint Esprit, La Pointe, as it was generally called, toward the western end of Lake Superior. Here he spent two years, ministering to his Indian parish of Ottawas and Hurons.

It was while he was at La Pointe that he began to hear of a great river beyond the forest country to the south, a river that came out of the trackless wilds of the north and rolled its mighty flood on toward the land of noon-day. The Indians called it the Mi-chi See-pee, the Great River, the Father of Waters. How he wished he could explore its course and plant the cross upon its banks!

However, all such dreams were soon cut short by fierce attacks of the Sioux, a brave and war-like race that lived on the edge of the forest country to the west and south and resented the presence of the Ottawas and Hurons who were only strangers, anyway, in the region of Lake Superior. In the spring of 1671, his whole mission at La Pointe—its Indian name was Cha-qua-me-gon—put all their household effects in canoes and migrated, following the shore of Lake Superior back eastward to the Falls of Saint Mary, the Sault. Father Marquette was just in time to have a part in the great ceremony there when Sieur de Saint Lusson took possession of the land in the name of the king of France. It was June 14, 1671.

But Father Marquette did not remain long at the Sault. He moved on with his Indian followers and established another mission on the Straits of Mackinaw. It was called St. Ignace after the founder of his order, and the present town of the same name has grown up on the site of his early settlement.

It was while Father Marquette was at St. Ignace that his opportunity came to see the Great River of which his Indian friends had told him so often. For some reason he was

chosen to accompany Louis Joliet who had been commissioned by Count Frontenac and the authorities at Quebec to explore the far west. His Father Superior at Quebec bade him go, but he needed no urging. It was the one ambition of his life. Listen to what he himself says:[1]

"We were not long in preparing all our Equipment, although we were about to Begin a voyage the duration of which we could not foresee. Indian Corn, with some smoked meat, constituted all our provisions: with these we Embarked, Monsieur Jollyet and myself, with 5 men in two bark canoes, fully resolved to do and suffer everything for so glorious an Undertaking."

It was May 17, 1673 when the little party set out. They coasted down the west shore of Lake Michigan and on into Green Bay. They were now in the country of the Wild Rice People, the Menominees. Father Marquette was much interested in the wild rice and described with great detail how it was harvested and cooked. From the Bay they passed to Fox River, where the St. Francis Xavier Mission was already established, and from this

[1] The quotations from Father Marquette's Journal are Thwaites' translation.

Marquette and Joliet Discover the Mississippi

(From Drake's Indian History)

point they ascended the river with guides to the portage to the Wisconsin. On the 17th of June, exactly one month after leaving St. Ignace, they entered the Mississippi.

The Great River was a stream of romance to Father Marquette. He was amazed at its size, its islands, its wooded banks and bordering plains over which roamed great herds of buffalo. It was not till the 25th of June that the party found signs of inhabitants along its shores. They had now reached the land of the Illinois.

As a rule the diary of Father Marquette is not very exciting reading, but one follows it breathlessly when he describes how he and Joliet went ashore to visit these first people they encountered.

"We therefore left our two Canoes under guard of our people, strictly charging them not to allow themselves to be surprised, after which Monsieur Jollyet and I undertook this investigation, a rather hazardous one for two men who exposed themselves alone to the mercy of a barbarous and unknown people."

But there were no dangers after all. They were received in a most hospitable and friendly manner. The villagers crowded up to stare at the strangers, and the peace pipe was offered

them; then after a speech by Father Marquette and a reply from the chief, there was a great council followed by a feast in four courses,—sagamity or corn-meal porridge, fish, roast dog, and buffalo meat. Next came a parade around the whole village which Father Marquette estimated at 300 wigwams. The two explorers slept that night in the chief's lodge and then went on their way.

Strange things greeted them constantly. Now Father Marquette marveled over the wild mulberries which were as large as those of France; now he was filled with horror at the awful beasts and goblins painted on rocks above the mouth of the Missouri; and again he remarked the sticky clays and ores which lent a gorgeous splendor to the river banks. The prairie had at last given way to forests, and beneath their shadows dwelt another savage folk who had guns, knives, beads, and other things which told of trade with Europeans. For a time the voyagers were well received, but an encounter with the Michigameans almost ended in disaster.

On and on they went. The Indians told them they were now only ten days distant from the Great Salt Sea, but Joliet did not believe it, and they kept on. They spoke to one tribe after

another, and Father Marquette describes their adventures with minute detail. But somewhere near the 34th degree of latitude, in the country of the Arkansaw, they turned back; they had accomplished their main purpose—to establish the course of the Great River as far south as possible. Their records must now be got through to Quebec.

It was hard work ascending the river against the current, and dangers were many; but at the mouth of the Illinois they struck across in the direction of Lake Michigan. The going was easier here, and the region delightful. Father Marquette's enthusiasm broke out afresh:

"We have seen nothing like this river we enter as regards its fertility of soil, its prairies and woods, its cattle, elk, deer, wildcats, geese, swans, ducks, perroquets, and even beaver."

They portaged over to Lake Michigan, and after many days the two explorers with their sturdy men turned in at the St. Francis Xavier Mission of Green Bay. Father Marquette had been transferred to this new mission center much to his delight.

The winter was spent in writing up an account of the expedition. After all the hardships of the summer's wanderings it was pleasant to sleep again under a roof and in a

bed, and to have friends about to share one's thoughts and hopes. In the spring Joliet left to make his report to the governor of New France, but in the Lachine rapids, almost within sight of Montreal, his canoe was overturned and he barely escaped with his life. His records, maps, and official report of the long journey down the Great River, were lost. One might add that Joliet was not a man to despair even in the face of disaster. He lived many years longer in the valley of the St. Lawrence, sometimes rich, sometimes poor, but always doing. He died in the year 1700, at the age of fifty-five.

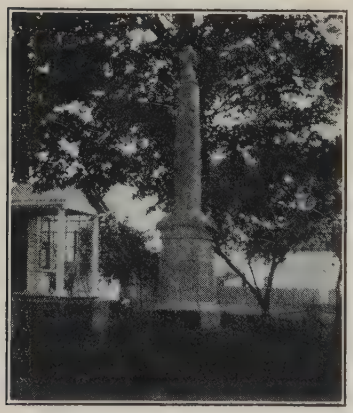
In 1674, the next year after his voyage down the Mississippi, Father Marquette received orders to found a mission among the Indians of the Illinois country. He had been in broken health when he returned from exploring with Joliet, but he seemed better again, and in October he fared forth once more, his canoe in charge of two faithful voyageurs. He followed the shore of Lake Michigan, which he called the Lake of the Illinois, making slow progress. As the cold weather came on, he found he had over-estimated his strength. On the fourth of December he and his companions reached the mouth of the Chicago River, and a few leagues

inland the winter halted them. The sturdy boatmen built a log cabin and there they prepared to remain.

The three men were tolerably comfortable in their little hut, and the hunting was good. A few Indians called now and then, and from one party Father Marquette was able to buy three buffalo robes in exchange for a little tobacco. The Indians were very fond of the white man's tobacco. Their own, called kil-li-ki-nik and made of the dried bark of several plants and shrubs, was a poor substitute for it. When the spring floods had subsided Father Marquette pushed on toward the villages of the Illinois where he planned to lift up the cross.

The new mission was established in the Indian town of Kas-kas-kia. The Illinois River at this point was broad and quiet, and prairies and sheltered woodlands bordered it. It was a populous region, and the people were contented and friendly. The stricken missionary had need of haste. He called a great council at Easter time, and in the midst of a vast assemblage of chiefs, warriors, squaws, and children, he declared his message of love and truth. On Easter Sunday he celebrated mass in the open air, but his strength was exhausted. His zeal and devotion

could sustain his weary body no longer. He saw the end approaching, and his thoughts turned to Mi-chi-li-mack-i-nac and the mission of St. Ignace and the ministrations of the church. With a broken heart he said good-bye to his savage people of the Illinois and began his homeward journey. But death overtook him, as we have described, on the lonely shore of the Great Water. He was only thirty-eight.



Grave of Father Marquette at St. Ignace

His two faithful canoemen carried the news of his death on to St. Ignace. Two years later, June 8, 1677, a party of friendly Indians carried his remains to the mission where they were buried under the chapel floor. Two hundred years passed by, the old chapel burned and was forgotten, and a new one was erected on a different site. But in 1877 the old grave was discovered and fitting honor was done

again to Father Marquette's resting place. *Requiescat in pace,* May he rest in peace! His name and work remain!

Ruins of Fort Mi-chi-li-mack-i-nac about 1830

(From an Old Engraving)

Chapter Two

ALEXANDER HENRY

And His Friend Wa-Wa-Tam

1739-1824

BACK and forth, winter and summer, between Mackinaw City and St. Ignace, plies the car-ferry, *Chief Wawatam,* bravely keeping up the rail connection between our two peninsulas. That name, like Father Marquette's, is a reminder of a stirring chapter in our early history.

We have come on now a hundred years since Father Marquette and his devoted followers established the Mission of St. Ignace. For a hundred years Frenchmen have been coming to the Straits, exploring, trading, doing missionary work. They have established sympathetic and friendly relations with the Indians whom they respected and understood; they have learned to speak the Indians' own language; they have gone in and out of the Indian villages as if they were at home there. And so they were.

But in the region of the Straits no English-

man had yet appeared, though everybody there was aware that the English flag was flying over Fort Detroit which the French had lost in 1760. The Indians knew that all of Canada, that is, New France, had been surrendered to the British—just how or why they did not understand. Old World jealousies meant nothing to them, deep in the heart of the New World. All they understood was that the Englishman was a conqueror, therefore they did not like him. And then one day an English trader appeared at the village of Mi-chi-li-mack-i-nac, on the south side of the strait where the State Park is now located. His name was Alexander Henry.

Henry was from our eastern province of New Jersey, and had followed General Amherst's army into Canada as a trader, but all his boats were wrecked. However, calamity did not dishearten him and, following the advice of an old French trader, he made his next venture into the country of the Great Lakes, where we see him arriving at Mi-chi-li-mack-i-nac with a little brigade of canoes in the year 1761. Of course he tried to hide the fact that he was English, but his boatmen talked too much and betrayed his secret. The French, though not very friendly, warned him of his danger and advised him to go on to

Detroit; as for the Indians, they looked at him with undisguised hostility. His peace of mind was not improved when he learned that the Chippewas of Mackinaw Island were on their way to visit him. He remembered that the word "visit" could mean anything!

The Present Fort of Mackinaw Island With Statue of Father Marquette in the Foreground

Well, the Indian visitors came. But it will be more interesting to read his own words:[1]

"At two o'clock in the afternoon the Chippewas came to the house, about sixty in number, and headed by Mi-na-va-na, their chief. They walked in single file, each with his tomahawk in one hand and scalping-knife

[1] *Travels and Adventure in Canada, etc.*

in the other. Their bodies were naked from the waist upward, except in a few examples, where blankets were thrown loosely over the shoulders. Their faces were painted with charcoal worked up with grease, their bodies with white clay in patterns of various fancies. Some had feathers thrust through their noses, and their heads decorated with the same. It is unnecessary to dwell on the sensations with which I beheld the approach of this uncouth, if not frightful assemblage. . . .

"Mi-na-va-na appeared to be about fifty years of age. He was six feet in height, and had in his countenance an indescribable mixture of good and evil. Looking steadfastly at me, where I sat in ceremony with an interpreter on either hand and several Canadians behind me, he entered at the same time into conversation with Campion, inquiring how long it was since I left Montreal, and observing that the English, as it would seem, were brave men and not afraid of death, since they dared to come, as I had done, fearlessly among their enemies.

"The Indians now gravely smoked their pipes, while I inwardly endured the tortures of suspense. At length the pipes being finished, as well as a long pause by which they were

succeeded, Mi-na-va-na, taking a few strings of wampum in his hand began the following speech:—

"'Englishman, you know that the French king is our father. He promised to be such; and we in return promised to be his children. This promise we have kept.

"'Englishman, it is you that have made war upon our father. You are his enemy; and how then could you have the boldness to venture among us his children? You know that his enemies are ours. . . .

"'Englishman, your king has never sent us any presents, nor entered into any treaty with us; wherefore he and we are still at war; and until he does these things we must consider that we have no other father nor friend among the white men than the King of France; but for you, we have taken into consideration that you have ventured your life among us in the expectation that we should not molest you. You do not come armed, with an intention to make war; you come in peace to trade with us, and to supply us with necessaries, of which we are much in want. We shall regard you, therefore, as a brother; and you may sleep tranquilly, without fear of the Chippewas. As a token of our friendship we present you this pipe to smoke.'"

Hardly was this "visit" over before he had another one from the Ottawas who lived down at L'Arbre Croche (The Crooked Tree), below Cross Village. But this was not a friendly call like the first one; the Indians demanded that Henry make them a present of all his goods, threatening to take them by force if he did not. Fortunately, that very day a detachment of British troops arrived from Detroit to garrison the empty fort which the French had left, and so trouble was averted for the time being.

The trader spent the winter at Mackinaw which was a safe enough place for him now. When spring came he journeyed on to Sault de Sainte Marie, where he lived in the cabin of a Monsieur Cadotte, a Frenchman with an Indian wife. Chippewa was the language of the family, and Henry wanted to improve his Indian talk. He made one trip back to the Straits the following winter, but he was back at the Sault again in the early spring of 1763, when he tells of making 1600 pounds of maple sugar in the forest near the settlement. Soon after this he returned to Mackinaw.

During all this time trouble was brewing. The Indians were growing restless and hostile. A war-belt and a blood-red tomahawk had been sent them by a runner from Pontiac, with a

request that they join him in wiping out the English. His plan was a gigantic one, and to further it he was sending out his rallying-call to all the tribes of the Great Lakes country, of the Mississippi forests, and even to the far South. He meant to restore to the Red Man his ancient hunting grounds. Gossip of what was going on circulated about the settlement at Mackinaw, but the little British garrison feared nothing, mistrusted nothing, and did nothing.

When Henry first came to Mi-chi-li-mack-i-nac an Indian by the name of Wa-wa-tam had conceived a strange friendship for him, and this attachment was proclaimed with some little ceremonial in the smoking of a pipe and the exchange of gifts. Henceforth they should be like blood-brothers, Wa-wa-tam said. Then he left the fort, and Henry speedily forgot all about him. White men are like that.

On the second of June, Wa-wa-tam appeared unexpectedly in the cabin of his friend Henry and urged him to accompany him the next day to Sault de Sainte Marie. He seemed troubled and talked mysteriously of bad news, calling it "the singing of evil birds." The next morning he returned, bringing a gift of dried venison. Again he urged Henry to go with him, saying

the region roundabout was full of Indians in camp, and that mischief was afoot. When the Englishman refused to leave with him, he went away in tears.

The attack upon the fort at Mackinaw, June 4, and the massacre that followed, are one of the tragic episodes in our state's history. Henry tells it all in his *Travels.*

The Indians began a game of ball outside the palisade of the fort. They were very fond of that sport; the Canadian game of la crosse is only the old Indian game a little civilized. The soldiers had crowded to the gates to watch the performance when suddenly the ball, by clever design, fell near the stockade. The savage players rushed after it, and on into the fort. Their stratagem had succeeded.

Henry himself, who was busy inside the fort writing letters which he planned to despatch the next day to Montreal, heard the war-cries and beheld the beginning of the slaughter. He quickly slipped over into the adjoining house of a French neighbor, Monsieur Langlade, and begged to be hidden from the savages. An Indian slave woman took him to the garret and told him to conceal himself there. It was none too soon, for almost in the same instant Indians arrived. They lamented to Langlade that they

had not found the dead body of the English trader, and thought he must be hiding somewhere about. Was any Englishman there? They were told to search the place for themselves. But again let us follow Henry's own words:—

"The state of my mind will be imagined. Arrived at the door, some delay was occasioned by the absence of the key, and a few moments were thus allowed me in which to look for a hiding-place. In one corner of the garret was a heap of those vessels of birch bark used in maple sugar making.

"The door was unlocked and opening, and the Indians ascending the stairs before I had completely crept into a small opening which presented itself at one end of the heap. An instant after, four Indians entered the room, all armed with tomahawks and besmeared with blood upon every part of their bodies.

"The die appeared to be cast. I could scarcely breathe, but I thought the throbbing of my heart occasioned a noise loud enough to betray me. The Indians walked in every direction about the garret; and one of them approached me so closely that at a particular moment, had he put forth his hand, he must have touched me. Still I remained

undiscovered, a circumstance to which the dark color of my clothes, and the want of light in a room which had no window in the corner in which I was, must have contributed. In a word, after taking several turns in the room, during which they told Monsieur Langlade how many they had killed and how many scalps they had taken, they returned downstairs, and I, with sensations not to be expressed, heard the door which was the barrier between me and my fate locked for the second time."

The next twenty-four hours were horrible ones for Alexander Henry. Although he knew he was far from safe, he could not resist sleep; toward evening he was awakened by Mrs. Langlade coming into his hiding place. She brought him some water to drink, and spoke a few words of assurance. Try as he might, he could not think of any way of escape; the lake was closed to him, he had no paddlers; and without a guide or provisions, he saw no way to reach Detroit, four hundred miles away through the forest. In his despair he fell asleep again. The next morning, at the entreaty of Mrs. Langlade who feared the vengeance of the Indians if he were discovered in the house, he was surrendered to the savages. After some discussion with Langlade the Indians

permitted him to remain in the house for the time being.

For the next few days poor Henry led a miserable existence. First, the Chippewas set out with him to take him to the Beaver Islands; but the Ottawas intercepted him on the way, and he was brought back to Mackinaw. Here he was finally taken along with the other prisoners who had escaped massacre to a large wigwam which served as a prison. Indians began to arrive to view and deride the captives. Then a sort of a council was opened in charge of Mi-na-va-na and Wen-ni-way, who had laid claim to Henry as his own booty. It was now that Wa-wa-tam appeared again, followed by his squaw bringing presents. After smoking in silence for a time, he arose and made the following appeal to the two war leaders:—

"Friends and relations, what is it that I shall say? You know what I feel. You all have friends, and brothers, and children, whom as yourselves you love; and you, what would you experience did you like me behold your dearest friend, your brother, in the condition of a slave; a slave exposed every moment to insult, and to menaces of death? This case, as you all know, is mine. See there my friend and brother among slaves, himself a slave!

"You all well know that long before the war began I adopted him as my brother. From that moment he became one of my family, so that no change of circumstances could break the cord which fastened us together. He is my brother; and because I am your relation, he is therefore your relation, too; and how, being your relation, can he be your slave?

"On the day on which the war began you were fearful, lest on this very account, I should reveal your secret. You requested, therefore, that I would leave the fort, and even cross the lake. I did so, but I did it with reluctance. I did it with reluctance, notwithstanding that you, Mi-na-va-na, who had the command in this enterprise, gave me your promise that you would protect my friend, delivering him from all danger, and giving him safely to me.

"The performance of this promise I now claim. I come not with empty hands to ask it. You, Mi-na-va-na, best know whether or not, as it respects yourself, you have kept your word; but I bring these goods to buy off every claim which any man among you all may have on my brother as his prisoner."

The bargain was made and Henry was released. He was taken straight to Wa-wa-

tam's wigwam where he was treated with affectionate attention. A week later he moved with Wa-wa-tam over to Mackinaw Island whither most of the Chippewas returned. They had pitched their camp on the flat shore where now the village stands. A messenger from Pontiac found them there, but they turned a deaf ear to his call. They were beginning to worry over what they had already done at Mi-chi-li-mack-i-nac, and had no desire to raise the war-cry again. Hunger finally compelled them to break up into little bands and seek the mainland. Henry remained with his friend the rest of the summer and the following winter. He dressed and lived like an Indian, hunting in the forests by day, and sleeping at night on a deer skin in Wa-wa-tam's wigwam. It was a wild, hard existence, but he was alive and well, and so many of his friends and acquaintances back at Mackinaw were dead!

After a time he got back to Montreal. He was still as adventurous as ever, and engaged in the fur trade for a few years longer. He even tried to organize a company to mine for copper in the Lake Superior country. Later he traveled to England and France, and in 1809 published a widely-read account of his adventures. He died in Montreal in 1824.

Fort Detroit in Early French Times
(From the Burton Historical Collection)

Chapter Three

FORT DETROIT IS BESIEGED BY PONTIAC

1763

THE British captured Quebec in 1759, and with the fall of the city New France passed into new hands, but a whole year went by before a British flag floated over Detroit. In the late autumn of 1760 Major Rogers came up Lake Erie with a company of soldiers, and with much parade and the beating of drums took possession of the fort and settlement. It had been French for fifty-nine years, and had grown to be a frontier village of much importance. It numbered 300 houses.

The French inhabitants beheld this change of government with mixed feelings; some of the old families were complacent and undisturbed; others were rebellious and hostile. The Indians were altogether unfriendly. They looked upon the English as deadly enemies, and their coming as a calamity. Pontiac, great war-chief of all the Indian tribes,—Chippewas, Ottawas, Pottawottamies, and Hurons, began

to plot to free the Great Lakes country of the hated Red Coats, the Sag-o-nash, as he called them. In April, 1763, he called a great council at Ecorce near Detroit. Representatives from many tribes were there. For days they had been on the way from Lake Superior, from Wisconsin and the headwaters of the Mississippi, from the Ohio, from beyond Lake Erie and the land of the Iroquois, to meet the great leader, and hear his words, and know his plans.

It was a solemn occasion. When all the chiefs and messengers were seated and waiting, Pontiac arose and addressed the assembly. The Great Spirit, the Master of Life, he said, had disclosed many things to him and laid a heavy burden upon him. He was called to drive out the English and restore all this country of forest and lakes to the Red Men and the French, the rightful owners. The British were doomed. He named their forts one by one, Niagara, Sandusky, Detroit, Mackinaw, Green Bay, St. Joseph—they all must fall, and he had given orders for their capture. Detroit should be his own prize, the hardest task he had kept for himself. Cries of approval greeted his words,—the Indians were ready for action.

The conspiracy of Pontiac was a gigantic

enterprise, and Pontiac himself was a giant figure. He had made himself a leader of his Indian allies by sheer ability—nothing else. He had the genius and the mind of a statesman. At the time of his siege of Detroit he was hardly more than fifty, and much experience on the war-path had made him wise. He had led the warriors when the British under General Braddock were defeated in the woods of Pennsylvania; and he was fighting by the side of his friends, the French, at Quebec when they went down to disaster, and their whole dominion with them. The Detroit country was his home, and from his village on Pêche Island at the beginning of the Detroit River he ruled over his savage world.

He had a carefully worked-out plan for the capture of the fort. He would ask for a council with the commander, Major Gladwin, and when he gave the signal every warrior with him should begin the slaughter. Before the soldiers outside could rally to the defense, the waiting Indians could rush in and capture the place. It was a well devised plan, but it failed. Gladwin had got wind of the plot, and in the council he berated Pontiac for his treachery and defied him to his face. Then he contemptuously allowed the chief and his followers

to depart. It was ill-advised nobility on his part, for massacre began almost at once. Whatever English were outside the fort were cut down without mercy.

The story of the siege of Detroit which lasted all summer is full of daring and heroic deeds. Most of the other forest strongholds over which the hated flag of England waved had been captured according to the great plan. Detroit must be no exception. Pontiac and his savage followers exerted every effort, and the handful of English within the fort resisted with a dogged determination. The little schooner *Gladwin* carried a message to General Amherst at Fort Niagara asking for help, and as an answer ten barges filled with men and provisions were sent to the relief of the garrison. The result was tragic. The flotilla, after braving the perils of Lake Erie, was captured at the mouth of the Detroit River, and the men who were not killed were forced to row the heavy boats up stream and pass tantalizingly in front of the fort. A Frenchman who kept a daily narrative of events wrote on May 30:

"Around nine o'clock in the forenoon, a soldier strolling along the sentry-walk, talking with a sentinel in the flag bastion which

faces the river, saw some craft appearing at Montreal Point on the Huron village side of the river. This soldier, as well as all the others, knew that the convoy was expected at any time with relief of provisions and men, and he hurried to notify the officer of the guard of what he had just seen. The officer, convinced, went to inform the Commandant and the other officers.

"All these came with the troops and traders, and climbed upon the bastion in order themselves to verify the soldiers' report and find out exactly what it was. They saw with a field-glass that it was really the convoy which had been so long expected. This caused great joy through the hope that reinforcements arriving would change the attitude of the Indians. However the joy was short-lived, being killed in its very birth, for it was interrupted by a number of war-cries which could be heard from the same place where the boats were in sight; it immediately gave place to gloomy forebodings for the convoy, because they thought then that the Indians had discovered and captured the boats and killed the men. And this was the case."

In the meantime Pontiac was doing his utmost to induce the French settlers to help

him in the war. His men were beginning to plunder and spoil the fields in order to get provisions. When the French raised a protest, a council was called and Pontiac expressed his feeling with much eloquence:

"I do not doubt, my brothers, that this war causes you annoyance because of the movements of our brothers who are coming and going in your homes constantly. I am chagrined at it, but do not think, my brothers, that I inspire the harm that is being done you. As a proof that I do not desire it, just call to mind the war with the Foxes, and the way I behaved as regards you seventeen years ago. Now when the Chippewas and Ottawas of Mi-chi-li-mack-i-nac, and all the northern nations, came with the Sacs and Foxes to destroy you, who was it that defended you? Was it not I and my men?

"When Mackinaw, the great chief of all these nations, said in his council that he would carry the head of your commander to his village, and devour his heart, and drink his blood, did I not take up your cause and go to his village, and tell him that if he wanted to kill the French he would have to begin with me and my men? Did I not help you rid yourselves of them and drive them away? How does it

come then, my brothers, that you would think me to-day ready to turn my weapons against you? No, my brothers, I am the same French Pontiac who helped you seventeen years ago; I am French, and I want to die French, and I repeat that it is altogether your interests and mine that I avenge. Let me carry out my plan. I do not demand your assistance because I know you could not give it; I only ask you for provisions for myself and all my followers. If, however, you should like to help me, I would not refuse; you would please me, and get out of trouble the quicker, for I promise when the English shall be driven away from here, or killed, we shall all withdraw into our villages, following our custom, to await the coming of our French father."

The next calamity that befell the British was the defeat at Bloody Run. It was a terrible but heroic happening, in that long summer of heroic deeds.

Near the end of July Captain Dalzell arrived with twenty-two barges. He had got up the river safely in the night under cover of a heavy fog. He brought 260 men and a supply of provisions. Captain Dalzell was a brave man and an experienced officer, but he did not know anything of Indian fighting. He thought all

PONTIAC.

he had to do was to march out with his men, worst the foe in a hand-to-hand combat, and return. But it was not as easy as that. He was so impatient to attack that he could not be restrained. Early in the morning of the last day of July, the gates of the fort were opened and Dalzell's men in a long file marched out along what is now Jefferson Avenue. They calculated on taking the Indians by surprise in their village up the shore.

The map of Detroit has changed much since then. At that time a creek cut down through a deep gully into the river near the present site of the Michigan Stove Works. It was crossed by a log bridge, and was sheltered by brush and trees. It was an ideal place for an ambush and any regular Indian fighter would have proceeded cautiously. But not Dalzell. He marched boldly on and into the trap. From all sides came wild yells and a merciless fire. The troops, thrown into confusion, were butchered like sheep. Major Rogers who was in the ill-fated expedition with twenty rangers took shelter with some of the soldiers in Campau's house. A rear-guard fight began, and the survivors battled their way back to the fort. Only ninety men returned. Since that time the gully and bridge were called Bloody Run.

There was one more daring adventure before the summer ended. On the night of September 4 the brave little *Gladwin* lay becalmed off Fighting Island, nine miles below the fort. She was on her way back from a trip to Niagara. She was dangerously near shore and her crew of twelve men dared not sleep. It was pitch dark, and every sound was magnified into a thing of terror. Down river on the current came a fleet of canoes and 350 Indians. Almost before their presence was discovered they were aboard. A volley of musketry met them full in the face, and then wild thrusts of pikes and swords. But nothing could stop them. The captain and five of the crew were killed or wounded at the first onslaught. It was at this desperate moment that Jacobs, the mate, called out an order to blow up the ship. The effect was instantaneous. Somebody among the Indians understood and cried the alarm. The savages who but a moment before were intent on slaughter, now went overboard, diving in a panic like frogs off a bank.

When the morning breeze came, what was left of the crew managed to make sail for Detroit, the decks of the boat still cumbered with dead sailors and Indians. In recognition of their bravery, General Amherst, com-

mander-in-chief at Fort Niagara, ordered a medal struck and presented to each of the heroic survivors. No doubt some of them may be found among old family heirlooms even now.

On the 12th of October the Indians came to the fort and smoked the pipe of peace; it was Pontiac's acknowledgement that his siege had failed. He immediately withdrew to the Ohio country, and later removed to the Mississippi where he strove in one last effort to keep his conspiracy alive. He begged for aid from the French at St. Louis; he incited the Illinois Indians to an uprising; he even sent an embassy and a war-belt to New Orleans, hoping the French there would respond to his appeal. But one by one his chiefs and friends deserted him; it was only too evident that his great scheme of revolt was at an end.

In the summer of 1765 another great council was held in the old Indian Room of Fort Detroit. Croghan, deputy of Sir William Johnson, and speaking for him, made a lengthy and flowery speech, such as the Indians liked. Here are his words in conclusion:

"Children, with this belt I take the hatchet out of your hands, and pluck up a large tree, and bury it deep so that it may never be found

any more; and in its place I plant the tree of peace which all our children may sit under and smoke in peace with their fathers.

"Children, we have made a road from the sunrise to the sunset. I desire that you will keep that road good and pleasant to travel upon so that we may all share the blessings of this happy union."

Pontiac replied:

"Father, we have all smoked out of this pipe of peace. It is your children's pipe; and as the war is over, and the Great Spirit and Giver of Light who has made the earth and everything therein has brought us all together this day for our mutual good, I declare to all nations that I have settled my peace with you before I came here, and now deliver my pipe to be sent to Sir William Johnson that he may know that I have made peace and taken the King of England for my father, in presence of all the nations now assembled. And whenever any of these nations go to visit him, they may smoke out of it with him in peace.

"Father, we are obliged to you for lighting up our old council fire for us, and desiring us to return to it; but we are now settled on the Miami River not far from here; whenever you want us, you will find us there."

Pontiac's surrender was complete. In the summer of 1766 he journeyed to Oswego, New York, to meet Sir William Johnson. It was a long canoe voyage from the Maumee across Lake Erie, and down the Niagara to Lake Ontario. The once mighty chieftain was now a man without a country or followers, but he still looked and behaved every inch a prince. In the council we hear him speak again:

"Father, when our great father of France was in this country, I held him fast by the hand. Now that he is gone, I take you, my English Father, by the hand, in the name of all the nations, and promise to keep this covenant as long as I shall live."

He kept his word, and never again did he lift his tomahawk on the war-path against the English. In the spring of 1767 he went to St. Louis to visit his old friend, St. Ange, the French commander. Then he crossed back to the eastern side of the Mississippi to the village of Ca-ho-ki-a, where an English trader hired an Illinois Indian to murder him. The price was a cask of rum. It was a cowardly deed which roused Pontiac's followers to vengeance, and before their fury was appeased they had almost destroyed every man, woman, and child of the guilty Illinois nation.

Detroit in Cass' Time

Chapter Four

LEWIS CASS

Soldier, Governor, and Statesman

1782-1866

LEWIS CASS, born at Exeter, New Hampshire, October 9, 1782, came of thoroughbred New England stock. His father was a Revolutionary soldier and bequeathed much dislike of England to his son. At the age of twelve the boy entered the well-known academy in his native town where he was a schoolmate of Daniel Webster. The careers of these two crossed again in a famous quarrel forty years later, when Cass was minister to France and Webster Secretary of State under President Andrew Jackson. After his graduation from Exeter he taught school for a time, then crossed the Alleghenies to the West in quest of fame and fortune. He found both.

In 1802 we see him established in a law practice at Marietta, Ohio, whence he removed to Zanesville. When Judge Brown was impeached and tried before the Ohio

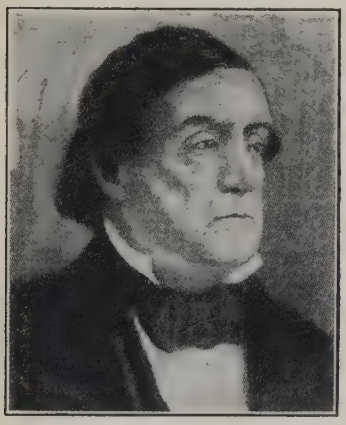
Legislature, it was Cass who defended him successfully. At the age of twenty-four he was elected to the state legislature of Ohio, its youngest member. Cass was a great admirer of Thomas Jefferson and a believer in Jefferson's theories of government. It was President Jefferson who appointed him United States Marshal of Ohio.

We have now reached the War of 1812 which was fought mostly on our northern border. Lewis Cass was made colonel of the 3rd Ohio, and by June was in Detroit with his regiment, attached to the army of General Hull. He was absent on an expedition to the River Raisin when Hull surrendered the fort and settlement, involving him and his men in the shameful capitulation. He denounced Hull to his face, and wrote the Secretary of War a fiery letter. Later, he testified against him when he was tried and found guilty of cowardice and incompetency before the enemy.

After his parole of honor, which he had given at Detroit, had expired, Cass was back again on the frontier as major-general of volunteers. He distinguished himself in the Battle of the Thames, October fifth, 1813, where the great warrior Te-cum-tha fell, and the same month was appointed Governor of

Michigan Territory. From this time onward till his death, he was Michigan's foremost citizen.

Detroit, when Cass settled there as governor, was only a little scattering settlement up and down the river. It was still a frontier community which, nevertheless, contained many old and new families of distinction. The Cass home, as government mansion, speedily became a center of social life in the little town. In its way it was a striking house, old even then, quaint, beautifully located on the river bank, and comfortable. McKenney, in a book called *Tour to the Lakes* (1827), gives an interesting description of it:



Lewis Cass the Statesman

"At two I dined with the Governor; and as you may be curious to know what kind of a mansion he occupies, I will give you a sketch of it. It is not exactly in, nor exactly out of the city—I mean its settled parts; but stands

by itself on the bank of the river, with the roadway from the city, towards Spring Wells between it and the precipice, or edge of the bank, down which a diagonal and rough way has been cut to the river. The house is of cedar logs, and weather boarded, one story, with a sharp roof, out of which and near the center, comes a short stone chimney of enormous thickness, and on which the roof leans, being a little sunk round about it.

"Before the front door, which is nearly in the center of the building, the building being nearly fifty feet front, is a porch that being a little out of its perpendicular position inclines north. . . . I told the Governor that my puzzle was as to which was built first, the porch or the house. He acknowledged his inability to decide the question, but added, 'the house itself is anterior to the time of Pontiac's war, there being on it now the marks of bullets which were shot into it then.' I learned afterwards that the porch had once ornamented the garden as a summer house; but that it had been advanced from its retirement to grace the front of the residence of the executive of the Michigan territory.

"A post and board fence runs between the house and the road, the house standing back

from the line of it, some ten or twelve feet. Two gate-ways open into the enclosure, one having been intended to admit, and the other to let you out, over a circular gravel walk that gives figure to a green plat in front of the door, and between it and the fence. One of these has been shut up, but how long I don't know—so we go in and come out at the same gate. . . .

"Now for the inside of the building. You enter first into a room, or saloon, of some ten feet square, in which the governor receives his business visitors; and where lie scattered about it in some tolerable confusion newspapers and the remains of pamphlets of all sorts, whilst its sides are ornamented with Indian likenesses, and pipes, and snowshoes, and medals, and bows and arrows, etc. On your left is the door which leads into the dining apartment, back of which is another room (in which is a fire place) of about the same size, dividing from it by folding doors. This dining room is warmed in winter by one half of a stove, whilst the other half, passing through the partition into the saloon, keeps that comfortable.

"From the right of the audience room, or saloon, you enter the drawing room; and in place of the back room, in the left division, two

rooms are arranged, one of which serves for the library, and the other for a lodging room. These rooms being all well carpeted and curtained, and furnished in excellent but plain style, present a view of comfort which forms a striking contrast to the exterior; and you are made to forget, in the midst of these interior accommodations, the odd-shapen and ancient appearance from without. There is much of the simplicity of republicanism in all this. Extrinsic appearances are to a reasonable extent disregarded; and the higher value is attached to the interior; and this is not an unfit emblem of the Governor himself. You are not to imagine, however, that this is intended to apply to his person; that is portly, and altogether governor-like, and in regard to which he is neat in his dress, and though plain, polished in manners."

Governor Cass lived a very energetic life, negotiating treaties with the Indians, making long trips to Washington, and supervising the government of his vast territory which extended to the Red River of the North and beyond. Mr. Schoolcraft tells with much detail of a canoe journey, in 1820, of 4000 miles which he made as a member of the Governor's party to discover the source of the Mississippi

River. They traversed Lake Huron and Lake Superior, and then from the St. Louis River portaged over to a branch of the Mississippi, which they ascended to Red Cedar Lake, since then called Cass Lake in honor of the Governor. Another and later expedition proved that the real source of the great river was in Lake Itasca. The return trip was made down the Mississippi, across Wisconsin to Green Bay, thence down Lake Michigan to Chicago. From this point Governor Cass came back to Detroit on horseback, along the Indian trail later known to the immigrants as the Chicago Road.

While Cass and his party on this expedition were in camp at Sault de Sainte Marie, the "Soo," a council with the leading Indian chiefs was held in his tent. The Governor explained that the United States government wanted to station a garrison at that point, and he desired to get their friendly assent to the plan. The land had already been ceded at an earlier date. The discussion was long and violent. The chiefs were openly hostile and opposed to the plan. One of them, Sas-sa-ba had been insolent enough to come to the pow-wow, wearing the flaming scarlet uniform of a major in the British army. His speech was war-like, and at last he strode from the tent in a fury,

kicking out of his way the presents which the Governor had laid out for the occasion. Then he went straight to his own tent and hoisted a British flag in defiance.

But General Cass was a fighter himself, and nothing enraged him more than sight of a British flag, especially on American territory. Alone and unarmed, he went with his interpreter to Sas-sa-ba's wigwam, pulled down the flag, and then walked boldly inside and berated the chief for a rogue and trouble-maker, and threatened the vengeance of the United States upon him and his followers if the Indians persisted in their attitude. It was a brave thing to do, and it had its effect, for the Indians rated courage above almost every other virtue. Before night the chiefs changed their minds and came to another meeting in a very much humbler mood.

What a trip that exploring expedition would have been for a Boy Scout to make! Read what one member of the party jotted down in his diary under date of July 28, 1820:

"We got under way at an early hour this morning and soon fell in with our Indian friends, without whose assistance we should find the navigation of the River very dangerous.

"Having now got into the Buffalo country, we landed about noon to enjoy the pleasures of a hunt. Immediately on ascending the bank we saw three or four droves of these animals, containing from 20 to 30 in each, which is considered as a number unusually small. We divided our party and took guides or instructors, intending to do the business systematically, and went in pursuit.

"Doct. Woolcott, Mr. Mackay and myself approached within 30 yards of a drove by crawling through the grass on our hands and knees, and after having taken deliberate aim, fired; but to our astonishment *every one scampered off apparently unhurt.*

"The other droves were fired at with almost as little success, and we began to despair, until one of the Indians brought a Bull down with a single ball; and afterwards two more were killed, together with an Elk and a Deer. The difficulty of killing a Buffalo is very great. I saw one shot seven or eight times without bringing him down, until an Indian ran up to him and shot him through the head. The Elk is very large and strong, resembling a Deer only in shape and color."

General Cass resigned his post as Governor of the Territory of Michigan in 1830 to enter

the cabinet of President Andrew Jackson as Secretary of War. He had served eighteen years as administrator of affairs on the border, in which time he had identified himself completely with Michigan. He had become a landowner in and around Detroit. Many titles to property in the city today go back to the old Cass Farm which lay between Cass and Third Avenues, stretching to the river. He was always enthusiastic for the improvement of the town, and watchful of its interests; he donated land for a park; with others, he secured land where the City Hall now stands and contributed to the erection of the Detroit Female Seminary which was an important "finishing" school of the early days; he promoted the establishment of a water system in which bored-out tamarack logs were laid for pipes. Now and then one is brought to light even now. Governor Cass was always a citizen and neighbor, as well as a Federal official, and Detroit was his only home.

After six years of cabinet service in Washington, he was appointed in 1836 minister to France. He was able to influence the French government in protest against England's efforts to legalize the right of search and seizure, and thereby came into violent dis-

agreement with his old school friend, Daniel Webster, who was Secretary of State. He finally resigned his post as minister, but as a result of the controversy with Webster became a national figure.

He was elected to the United States Senate as a member for Michigan, and here was as anti-British as ever. In the debate over the Oregon question he said: "Now the Oregon, I claim, is all Oregon, and no vote of mine in this senate will surrender one *inch* of it to England."

He was nominated for the Presidency in 1848, but failed of election due to a split in the vote of New York and Pennsylvania. Probably he was at the top of his career between 1857 and 1860, when he was Secretary of State in Buchanan's cabinet. He did his utmost to stiffen Buchanan's policy in the face of the growing preparations for secession, and resigned office when the President refused to reinforce the forts at Charleston.

For the next six years he lived a life of retirement in his home in Detroit, indulging his scholarly tastes in reading and writing. He was an ardent patriot and lived long enough to see the Civil War brought to a successful termination. He died June 17, 1866.

The Steamboat Walk-in-the-Water With Governor Cass' House in the Background
(Farmer's History of Detroit)

Chapter Five

THE WALK-IN-THE-WATER

First Steamboat on the Detroit River

1818-1821

WHEN the War of 1812 was ended—a war that was fought mostly along the frontier of the West, the people of our eastern states seemed to be moved by a great impulse to go west themselves and seek out homes in the valley of the Ohio and in the forests of Michigan. "Westward! Westward!" was the cry, and every way leading to the new lands was choked with "movers," men bringing their families and their household goods to houses they were yet to build, on farms they were yet to clear. Before 1835 ninety thousand such daring adventurers had come into the Territory of Michigan. Every community in the southern part of the state has a few old families who go back to grandfathers or great-grandfathers who were pioneers.

The digging of the Erie Canal, begun in 1818 and opened for use in 1825, and the first steamboats and railroads, together with a few

wagon roads slashed through the wilderness, helped this movement of population westward. Naturally, the coming of the first steamboat to Detroit was an event of far-reaching importance in the history of the state.

August 26, 1818 was almost a holiday in the little town of Detroit. The news had arrived in some way that a steamboat had been at anchor all night off shore in Lake Erie and was now on her way up the river. Hudson's Wharf had been got ready at the foot of what is now Bates Street, and all the lookout points were occupied by men, women, and children. Indians, too, a-plenty were in the background. Possibly they felt a little proud that this new devilish contraption of the white man was named after one of their chiefs who was still living down the river where Wyandotte now is. The real name of this old warrier signified turtle. The whites had translated it into "Walk-in-the-Water," and that was the name of the boat now approaching Detroit on her first trip.

The building of the boat was an experiment in steam navigation on the Great Lakes. Already on the Hudson River between New York and Albany steamboats were a popular means of travel. If such a means of trans-

portation could be adapted to the Great Lakes it would be a mighty agency in the development of the West. The *Walk-in-the-Water* was the first attempt in this new venture. She was laid down at Black Rock on the Niagara River, on lines patterned after the *Fulton,* then plying on the Hudson. Her dimensions were, length 135 feet, beam 32, depth 8 feet. It is interesting to compare her with the present D & C boats, *Greater Detroit* and *Greater Buffalo,* which are 550 feet long, and 100 feet wide.

The *Walk-in-the-Water* had two masts with rigging for sails. Her engine was below deck; her paddle wheels were fifteen feet in diameter and located exactly amidships. They dipped two feet into the water. Her smokestack, thirty feet high, towered up among the sails. Passenger arrangements were modeled after those of sailing ships. Her cabins were all below deck, those for women in the after part of the ship, those for men forward next the dining room. This probably suited the men. The kitchen was in the bow. The fare from Buffalo to Detroit was $18 for cabin passage. There was also a steerage.

The *Walk-in-the-Water* could carry a hundred passengers, and she provided a popular

way to reach the confines of civilization. Some famous people sailed on her in her day. On her first trip she brought among other distinguished people Thomas Douglas, fifth earl of Selkirk, with his wife and children.

The Walk-in-the-Water and View of Early Detroit
(Burton Historical Collection)

This Earl of Selkirk was a very remarkable man. He had an enthusiasm for establishing colonies in America for the poor peasants of Scotland. He had already planted one on Prince Edward Island, and another one on the Red River of the North, beyond the headwaters of the Mississippi, near where Winni-

peg is now located. There his settlement came into conflict with the Northwest Bay Company—Selkirk himself was head of the Hudson's Bay Company—and was nearly destroyed by a border uprising. He was unable to obtain any legal redress. In 1821 the two companies settled their differences and combined, but the Earl had died in 1820, the victim of the selfishness of his rivals. When he came to Detroit on the *Walk-in-the-Water* in 1818, he was on his way to visit his colony of Baldoon, up beyond Lake St. Clair.

Another passenger on this first trip was Colonel Robert Dixon, the famous, and also infamous, British Indian agent who had figured so much as Indian leader against the Americans in the Upper Mississippi country before 1814. He was now on his way to the Northwest where he was still in charge of Indian affairs for the Canadian government. This was not his first visit to Detroit—he had come down with his savages from Mackinaw when the English were in command there.

But the *Walk-in-the-Water* was now approaching Detroit. Bells were ringing, business was suspended, everybody who could go was down by the river. Some of the leading citizens had met the steamer at Fighting

Island, and at 9 a. m. she docked at Hudson's Wharf. Her captain made an imposing figure on her paddle box, and the gossip is that Judge Woodward, the town's first citizen after Governor Cass, sat astride the bowsprit and was gloriously cheering and chewing tobacco at the same time. No wonder the Detroit Gazette reported that "a pleasant time was had by all."

The last voyage of the *Walk-in-the-Water* was as disastrous as the first had been auspicious. For three years now she had been in constant operation between Buffalo and Detroit. October 30, 1821, she set out from Buffalo on what was destined to be her last trip. Threatening weather soon turned into a gale, and the captain was obliged to turn back and try to find shelter behind Point Abino. But he was unable to do this, and so headed for Buffalo. Then fearing he might be driven ashore, he tried to anchor. This maneuvre did not help; the anchor dragged, the tugging at the cable opened the timbers of the ship, and she began to fill and settle. The pumps were unable to keep the water down, and it was evident she could not float much longer. The deck gun was fired as a signal of distress, the anchors were cut loose, and the craft drove

toward the beach. Once or twice the breakers caught her, shook her viciously, then she struck and heeled over in the sand.

Everything aboard the boat was topsy-turvy, but the passengers, though suffering from exposure and terror, were safe for the time being. When daylight came, a sailor got ashore with a line, and after heroic efforts a hawser was landed and tied securely to a tree. Finally the passengers managed to reach shore and a little later were back in Buffalo whence they had started not so long before. Those bound for Detroit continued their journey overland through Canada. Among them was one Thomas Palmer, father of Senator Thomas W. Palmer, who gave Palmer Park to the city of Detroit.

Three years the *Walk-in-the-Water* had breasted the waters of Lake Erie. Her career was brief, but she had already contributed much to the settlement of Michigan.

Governor Stevens T. Mason

Chapter Six

STEVENS THOMSON MASON

The Boy Governor

1811-1843

ONE of the most interesting and romantic figures in our history is Stevens T. Mason, the "Boy Governor." Although the old books and records tell us very little about the man himself, nevertheless he had a large share in the launching of Michigan Territory into statehood. He is a part of that era of transition from the days of the fur trader and the Indian to the later days of the steamboat, the railroad, and the pioneers.

The Mason family was an old and distinguished one. The first ancestor in America was a George Mason who fled from England for safety from Cromwell. A later ancestor was an intimate friend of Washington, Patrick Henry, and Thomas Jefferson. Stevens' grandfather was a member of the Virginia Convention of 1788, and later senator of the United States.

It was on the 27th of October, 1811, that

Stevens Thomson was born into the famous line of Masons. A year later his father moved over the Blue Ridge Mountains, settling at Lexington, Kentucky, where he became a very successful lawyer. But being a good lawyer does not always mean a wealthy one, and the family fortunes soon fell into a state of decline. The youth, Stevens, left his private studies in his father's office and turned grocery clerk. Then came the election of General Andrew Jackson as President and the luck turned. The father was appointed Secretary of Michigan Territory. It was 1830.

Stevens Thomson was delighted at the prospect of life in that wilderness of a territory which was as vast as an empire. He reviewed in his mind all that he has heard about it; there would be Detroit, a French village, which turned English, and was now American; and Indians, descendants of those that leagued with Pontiac to destroy the English and their power; and trade and opportunity for wealth. Thus he dreamt, but his wildest imaginings did not lead him to foresee what would happen to him in the next twelve years.

Early in 1830 the Mason family made the long journey north to Detroit which contained less than 2500 people at this time. It was the

only settlement of any size in the territory that then extended far beyond Lake Michigan into the country of the Mississippi. A few counties were already laid out in this vast expanse, but the roads to them were hardly more than trails, and Indian trails, at that. Settlers were beginning to come, seeking a new home like the Masons themselves, but they brought no wealth with them. They were to find it in Michigan as they cleared away the forests.

The young man went again into his father's office where he rapidly learned the routine of such a clerkship. After a year in his new position, John T. Mason, the father, became interested in certain land claims in Texas through rights inherited from his father of Revolutionary fame. He resigned with the intention of going to that distant region. At this same time General Lewis Cass was called to the cabinet of President Jackson as Secretary of War, and Michigan Territory was without a secretary and a governor. However, President Jackson was never without resources, and he never forgot his friends. And it seems that the Masons were his friends. He immediately appointed young Stevens Thomson Mason to his father's vacant post. As to the governorship, that could wait; a

secretary would be able to keep the machinery running.

Young Mason was not yet twenty-one years of age, and the public gasped with surprise. But possibly Jackson knew what he was doing; the young man was able, and he understood all about the business of the territory which he had learned as his father's assistant. But to be Secretary of the Territory, in the absence of a governor, meant exercising the functions of this high office. And could a mere youth do that, with any result but disaster?

The good citizens of Detroit called a mass meeting of protest and framed a resolution asking for his removal. They cited but one reason for this action, but this reason they considered highly important; the extreme youth and inexperience of a "stripling." Tom Mason, as he was popularly called, now met the remonstrance with vigor. He published a statement "To the Public" which won him instant favor. In it were some clever sentences. Answering the objection that he might be called upon to act as governor, he said: "But suppose these high duties do occur for a momentary space? Is there any difficulty of getting the advice of wiser and abler men? The oldest ask advice; and no man in that

respect is independent of the society in which he lives. The difference is, youth yields to advice; but age, seldom or never." And then he wrote a personal letter to President Jackson, the last paragraph of which was as follows:

"I write you this as due to the confidence you have reposed in me; and especially due to the expression of a wish (equal to a command with me) to hear from me frequently. I desire not to convey the idea that I am in trouble or difficulty. I see my way clear and feel a confidence in maintaining myself against all opposition, if sustained by you, of which I feel a perfect assurance.

"With sentiments of high estimation and filial regard, I have the honor to be

"Your obt. servant
"S. T. Mason."

It is safe to say that there are many holding state office in Michigan today who could not compose a letter such as young Stevens Thomson Mason wrote to President Andrew Jackson.

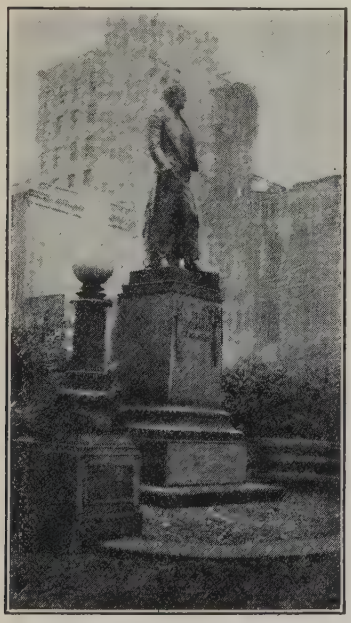
The naming of George B. Porter later in the year as Territorial Governor helped to relieve

the situation. But Governor Porter was absent from Detroit much of the time, Mason acting in his absence, fulfilling the duties of the office so well, in fact, that he became very popular and highly regarded. Events were to transpire which should put all his ability to the test.

Governor Porter died in 1834, and Stevens T. Mason now became Acting-Governor. Though only twenty-three he behaved with the wisdom of a veteran. Throughout the Territory a desire was rife for statehood. According to the Ordinance of 1787 there could be no talk of Michigan's admission into the Union till the census showed at least sixty thousand people. In the summer of 1834 Acting-Governor Mason convened the Legislative Council which immediately passed an act providing for an enumeration of population. It also resolved that that part of the Territory lying west of Lake Michigan (what is now Wisconsin, Iowa, Minnesota, and a part of the Dakotas) should be set off as a separate territory in order that actual Michigan might develop in a unified area.

When the census returns were all in, the figures showed that the lower peninsula had

85,856 people, a third more than was necessary for admission to statehood. But another matter at once loomed into view; statehood brought up the boundary question with Ohio. According to the Ordinance of 1787 which organized the so-called Northwest Territory, whenever Michigan Territory should be set off by itself, its southern boundary should be a line running due east and west from the southern end of Lake Michigan, and such was the boundary given the territory in 1805. This line ran south of the Maumee River; but Ohio, in order to include Toledo within her limits, had set the boundary farther north. The little strip of land involved was not much, but those were the



Statue and Grave of
Governor Mason
in Capitol Park, Detroit

days of state rights with a vengeance, and the result was the famous "Toledo War."

Acting-Governor Mason showed his mettle now. When surveying parties came into this bit of border territory, they were chased out by Michigan authorities. Then the militia of both states was called out, Governor Mason giving orders to shoot any man caught "driving a stake into the soil of Michigan." At the distance of a hundred years, this border quarrel looks like a tempest in a teapot, but it was not regarded thus in those touchy and vigorous times. But at length Congress settled the matter, finding a solution of the trouble which was finally accepted by both parties. The disputed area was given to Ohio, and in exchange Michigan received the whole of the so-called Upper Peninsula. This settlement was not viewed everywhere with favor, for the region north of the Straits was thought to be a wilderness frozen, wild, and uninhabitable. It has turned out to be a bonanza in disguise, a cloud with an iron and copper lining.

On the 26th day of January, 1837, Michigan was admitted into the Union as a state, and

Stevens T. Mason, not yet twenty-six years old, was the first governor. Let us take a good look at him. His face is handsome yet strong, his forehead high, his hair brown and wavy. When he speaks, his voice is clear and persuasive. He dresses in the height of fashion, but is not a dandy; he looks, and is, a thoroughbred gentleman of his day.

The years that follow are busy ones for the young governor. He organizes and directs the political machinery needed to get the young state into successful operation. He is a thorough-going executive, inspiring confidence and a following. The Mansion House in Detroit, the capital, becomes the center of a gay and cultured society; balls and formal dinners bring together distinguished visitors and citizens. His favorite sister, Emily, a typical Virginia belle, at first is his hostess, doing the honors with grace and elegance. But in the fall of 1838 he brings to Detroit his bride, Julia Elizabeth Phelps, daughter of a banker of New York City. Young Governor Mason goes down east to negotiate a loan of five million dollars for the new state and he secures a wife to bind the bargain.

In 1838 Governor Mason was reelected to a second term which ran smoothly and unevent-

fully through to the end. At the conclusion of his period of office he removed to New York City to take up the practice of law. He thought he saw a future there that the new state did not offer. Within a year he was at the head of a large and rapidly growing business. But man proposes and God disposes. Shortly after a gay New Year celebration at his home, he was taken ill of scarlet fever and in three days he died. The date is January 4, 1843.

Sixty-two years go by, and then Stevens T. Mason comes back to the state which was the scene of his fame. In this intervening time he has been almost forgotten, save by a few who try to keep alive the memories of the past. The Legislature in 1894 passed a resolution to have his body brought back to Michigan. This was the wording: "The Legislature of the State of Michigan deems it eminently fitting that the mortal remains of Governor Mason should rest in the soil of the state he loved and served so well."

In 1908 a monument was erected over his tomb in Capitol Park, Detroit. It is a bronze statute of life-size proportions. There, near where stood the old State House of the Territory, and of the first years of Michigan, the

state, sleeps the young Virginian who played such a heroic part in our history. He belongs to Michigan now.

John D Pierce in His Old Age

(From a Painting at the State Normal College)

Chapter Seven

JOHN D. PIERCE

Pioneer Superintendent of Public Instruction

1797-1882

JOHN D. PIERCE plays an important part in our drama of Michigan history; he is the founder of our school system, and stands out as the first great educator of the Northwest Territory.

This man who was a pioneer in two senses, a pioneer in a new land, and a pioneer in the field of education, was a member of the seventh generation of his family in America. The first John Pierce settled at Watertown, Massachusetts, in the year 1637. The later generations produced many men famous in American history: among them, General Benjamin Pierce, one-time governor of the state of New Hampshire, and his son Franklin D. Pierce, President of the United States. John D. Pierce, subject of our sketch, was a cousin born February 18, 1797.

His early boyhood was not a very happy one. When he was two years old his mother was left

a widow, and was obliged through lack of means to take the boy to his grandfather, David Pierce, at Paxton, Massachusetts. In 1808 David Pierce died, and the ten-year old John was now left to the care of an unfriendly uncle. His next few years were hard ones. Although he was eager to get an education, he had only a few months of schooling in the winter time each year, during this period; he was forced to work the rest of his time for his board. Reading was his only pleasure, and he tramped miles to get books from a library. Soon an opportunity came to earn a little money from a neighbor, and he stuck to his task until he had accumulated a hundred dollars. With this, reinforced by another hundred which was a legacy from his grandfather, he made his plans to enter college for a "real education."

While not old, he seemed to have grown up. He was well developed physically, and mentally he was superior to most boys of his age. His bringing-up on the farm had made him thoroughly self-reliant. This is indicated by his nickname, "Stubborn John." At eighteen he passed through a religious awakening, such as was common in the lives of our New England great-grandfathers. From

that time on he had but two ambitions—to get an education, and to become a minister of the gospel.

Although he had the necessary funds to start his college course, he found that he lacked the necessary academic preparation, so he became a Latin student of the Reverend Ezra Pond, a man who was to be his closest friend for a year and destined to exert great influence over him. This minister was only twenty-six, but even then a clear thinker and writer. Young John Pierce learned the essentials of theology along with Latin from him, and together they spent many hours discussing and arguing over religious doctrines. It may have been Ezra Pond who persuaded Pierce to enter Brown University—he himself was a graduate of that institution. At any rate, he enrolled there as a freshman in the fall of 1815, with two hundred dollars in his pocket. But money did not last then any more than now, and the young student was obliged to help out his expenses by teaching school three or four months each winter. His stubborn perseverance won the day, however, and he was graduated in the year 1822, among the first eight in a class of thirty-two. The next year he became

principal of the academy at Wrentham, Massachusetts.

His first ambition had been realized,—he had secured his education, or a part of it, at any rate. But now he remembered his second cherished hope, and entered Princeton Theological Seminary in 1823. The next year he was licensed to preach by the Congregational Church. At the age of twenty-seven his life work seemed to stretch away before him; he did not foresee that he would spend half a century on the edge of the wilderness as pioneer preacher and educator.

He accepted a call to the Congregational Church at Sangerfield, New York, and was married the same year. He and his bride took a short trip to Boston where they were fortunate enough to meet General Lafayette on his last visit to America.

His pastorate in Sangerfield was not a pleasant one. It was about this time that a terrific anti-Masonry agitation swept the country, and when the furor reached Sangerfield it engulfed the Reverend John D. Pierce, for he was a Mason. After facing dissentions and the persecution of his enemies, he finally resigned and the next year set out for the West to spy out the land. He reached Detroit safely,

then mounted a horse and rode west along the trail to Ypsilanti. At this last-named settlement he took the right-hand turn and pursued his way on the Territorial Road, past Ann Arbor, Jackson, Albion, until he reached Marshall, where a few hardy souls like himself had stopped before him.

We have now reached the time when John D. Pierce began to figure in the affairs of Michigan Territory. In the Ordinance of 1787 which created the Northwest Territory occurred these memorable words:

"Religion, morality, and knowledge, being necessary to good government, and the happiness of mankind, schools and the means of education shall be forever encouraged."

The Territorial government made some feeble effort to institute schools and lay out school districts, and certain lands were to be taxed for the support of schools. But in 1835 agitation for state government led to a new program of education, and it was included in the provisions of the new state constitution. The Legislature was to provide specifically for a Superintendent of Public Instruction; likewise, for a system of common schools and school districts; and there should be at least one school library in each township.

John D. Pierce's Commission as Superintendent of Public Instruction

This was in reality the scheme worked out by Mr. Pierce and his friend, Isaac Crary, of Marshall. In the first constitutional convention, Mr. Crary was chairman of the committee on education and succeeded in having the plan adopted. And when later he was elected a delegate to Congress from the Territory, he was far-seeing enough to recommend his friend, the circuit rider, Reverend John D. Pierce of Marshall, as the man to inaugurate the new theories of education. In July, 1836, Pierce was formally appointed Superintendent of Public Instruction, the first person to hold that office in the United States.

Upon receiving his commission, Mr. Pierce decided to spend some time in studying schools and their administration in New England. He journeyed through several states, interviewing prominent school authorities, attending school meetings, investigating school methods and government. He remarked in an interview at Concord that it had taken him three weeks to come there from Michigan, but that the time would come in his own lifetime, when the trip could be made in one day. He lived to see his prophecy fulfilled.

Nothing shows his ability and genius better than this journey down East to the centers

of education. Almost overnight he changed from a minister in a frontier settlement to a keen observer and student of educational matters. When he came back to Michigan he had formulated in his own mind the underlying principles of a unified school system.

John D. Pierce held the office of Superintendent of Public Instruction till the middle of the year 1841, and in this time he laid the foundations of Michigan's education. He succeeded in having every sixteenth section of land taken over for the support of schools; he helped pilot the State University through the perils of its first years; he founded "The Journal of Education," which was a forerunner of our modern educational magazines; he advocated teachers' institutes and meetings, and special preparation in teacher training institutions. He was an organizer, but also a builder.

Following his years of public office, he retired to Marshall and farming. In 1847 he was elected to the state legislature where he was a member of the committee that gave to the state a permanent capital in Lansing. In 1853 he removed to Ypsilanti which was to be henceforth his home for more than thirty years. Throughout all these years he kept up

his interest in public affairs, and for a time was president of the local school board. In his old age he was still a gracious and charming gentleman, and a popular and honored guest at University and Normal School functions.

By the year 1880 he had grown so feeble that he went back to New England to live with a daughter. But New England was too rocky and barren; he pined for the wide reaches of his fertile West. He died at the home of his daughter in Medford, Massachusetts, April 5, 1882. The last wish of his life was that he might be buried in Michigan where he had lived and toiled for fifty years. They brought his body back to his early home. If one journeys to the old cemetery at Marshall, one may find a simple monument with this inscription:

REV. JOHN D. PIERCE
DIED
APRIL 5, 1882
AGED 85 YEARS

FOUNDER OF MICHIGAN'S
SCHOOL SYSTEM

ERECTED BY TEACHERS
AND PUPILS OF THE
PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF MICHIGAN

Early Canal Boat Travel

(From an Old Print)

Chapter Eight

HOW A PIONEER CAME TO MICHIGAN

1828

ONE day in 1828 a young man alighted from a stage in Crown Point on the shore of Lake Champlain in York State. He was returning from a trip into the West, to Michigan, beyond Lake Erie, where he had gone to explore and see what the land was like. Maybe it would be a good place for a man to settle and gain a home of his own.

Instead of going directly to his father's house, he turned into the tavern where a crowd of villagers always awaited the stage and news. Sight of the young man stirred Yankee curiosity and inquisitiveness to the breaking point.

"Land sakes, if here aint Eliphalet Judson! Be ye back already? Now what did ye see? Injuns?"

The company laughed as they greeted the newcomer with lusty handshakes and whacks on the back.

"Wall," said the young man slowly, "I found some land, anyway. That's a great country, boys, for land. Of course, it's still covered with timber,—Gosh a'mighty, what timber! And there aint no roads, and the Injuns do still hang around the settlements, and life is hard there; but some day it will be a rich and prosperous country, and I reckon I'll be there. I've bought a hundred and sixty acres, and I'm goin' to Michigan jest as soon as I can pry a yoke of oxen away from Dad."

This was a very long speech for Eliphalet, and he paused for breath.

"What about gittin married fust?"

This remark was greeted with laughter, and Eliphalet blushed, but he was game.

"Mebby I shall take a fling into matrimony, too, by mighty! A man has got to have a wife out there, that's sure, though I can't say it's any place for a woman yet."

He picked up his bundle and went on down the village street, and then passed into a country road. He had some things to straighten out with his father. He turned in at a little farmhouse that stood on a poor and rocky farm. He was eight and twenty, like the year itself, and other sons and daughters were crowding him from the nest. He felt that he

should have spread his wings before. He had gone exploring in the West because of the urge to plant a home of his own somewhere.

We can give only a few details of Eliphalet Judson's trek westward to Michigan. There was a long talk that night with his father and mother before the wide fire-place, and finally things were settled like this: he should have a yoke of oxen and a wagon in which to store a few implements and household goods. He could regard it all as his inheritance, paid in advance, out of the old home.

"But a wife, Eliphalet,—will Mary go?"

"I don't know, father, I haint asked her yet—I'm almost afraid to."

"Shucks, boy, go on and see Mary at once. If she's the sort wuth havin', there haint nothin' in the forests of Michigan to scare her."

The next day Eliphalet made a trip across the hills to where Squire Davis lived to call upon the girl of his choice. Everybody in the community knew they had been boy and girl sweethearts. But the question was now—would she leave the comforts of her father's house to follow her man on the emigrant road?

Two weeks later Eliphalet Judson and Mary Davis were married, and the next week they

loaded their covered wagon for the West. Mary received from her mother a feather bed or two, and linen to match, and some kitchen things. The squire, her father, gave her a hundred dollars. Mary wept, and Eliphalet blew his nose with some concern as they said good-bye, then the oxen were headed down across the mountains toward the Erie Canal. It was getting to mid-summer and they camped out by the road-side unless some hospitable farmer gave them shelter.

It was the 15th day of July when they struck the canal at Utica. After some delay they got passage, along with many others, on a canal boat for Buffalo. The oxen were put in stables in the forward end, the wagon was taken down and loaded aboard with the goods on top of it, and they had quarters in a cabin in the stern.

Progress was slow, but it was not altogether dull; the stopping at the locks, the changing of teams on the tow-path, the little villages and towns they passed made an agreeable diversion. They lived on the canal boat as on a ship; everyday brought the same old food, but it was eaten in a new place. August 5, they were in Buffalo, and a few days later had taken passage on the steamer *Pioneer*. Eliphalet paid $30 for their fare, and $50 freight for the

oxen and the wagon. August 15, the good ship landed them in Detroit, the capital city of the Territory, and gateway to the wilderness.

It took a day or two to settle matters at the land office, then the wagon was loaded again, the canvas was stretched over it, and their team became one of three, pulling out on the Chicago Trail. The road was passable only because the weather was dry. The oxen were fresh and full of life, and the load was not heavy, though purchases in Detroit of a plow and some supplies had added to it somewhat.

The first night, August 18, they stopped at Ten Eyck's tavern east of Dearborn. Conrad Ten Eyck was graduated in the same class with Martin Van Buren, but fate had tossed the two friends far apart. The second day brought them to Sheldon's place, twenty-two miles out of Detroit. Four miles east of Sheldon's was the log tavern of a man named Simmons whose reputation was hardly better than that of a highwayman. Two years later he murdered his wife and was hanged in Detroit from a scaffold in a square, fronting where Hudson's store is now. The crowd was immense, and the regimental band did funereal honor to the occasion. As he went to his execution, the

condemned man sang in a fine baritone voice part of a hymn:

"Show pity, Lord, O Lord, forgive,
Let a repenting rebel live;
Are not Thy mercies full and free?
May not a sinner trust in Thee?"

August 20, they reached Ypsilanti, a little village on the Huron. Here the road, such as it was, really ended, but the wagons managed to get a few miles beyond the settlement by sundown. That night they camped in the open and had a memorable dinner. Eliphalet had shot a wild turkey which took two hours to boil before it was tender enough to eat.

From now on the road was strictly a path in the wilderness. It had been surveyed through toward Chicago, and the right of way partly slashed out, but travel had not yet made it into a highway. The patient oxen bent their necks under the yoke, and the little company crawled on. Mary's heart sank as they got farther and farther into the woods. Deer were seen almost every day, and it was not unusual to hear the howl of the wolves at night.

Eliphalet knew the way, for he had already passed over it on foot in his early visit of exploration. Seven days travel on the trail from Ypsilanti brought his wagon to a big

tree that was a well-known landmark. It is mentioned in all the early surveys of the region. There he halted and pulled aside from the road. The others stopped, and they all had a final camp together. Mary and the other women sat in a little group and talked far into the night. It would be long before she saw the face of a white woman again.

With much trouble, chopping out logs and hawing around windfalls, Eliphalet managed to get his wagon onto the quarter section which was already blazed out. It was August 26, 1828, when the two young folks, pioneer settlers in Hillsdale county, unyoked their oxen in a little glade among the trees and knew that their long journey was at an end.

They made a camp as best they could out of a piece of canvas for a tent. There was an open marsh near by where blue-joint grew man-high, and Eliphalet's first work was to go to haying on his meadow. The beavers had cleared that much land for him ages before. Not until the hay was cut and stacked did he rest; he was bound that Buck and Brindle, his faithful oxen, should have something better than browse to munch on in the coming winter.

Haying over, he went at his house, a log cabin, fourteen by twenty feet. He cut the

logs, notched the ends, and rolled them into place himself. Mary helped whenever she could. At last the walls were up, the roof was on and covered with black ash shakes which he rived out on the spot. There were two windows set with seven by nine panes of glass which he

A Train on the Adrian and Kalamazoo Railroad (L. S. & M. S.) in 1837

had purchased in Detroit and brought with great care into the woods. He chinked and daubed the walls with clay, and at the end of the cabin he built a fire-place of logs, like the house. He made a stone lining for it, and faced it all with stiff clay. It would last till

something better could be constructed. It took him two months to get a roof on his cabin, and it was the end of November before the chimney was done. But when snow came they were snug and comfortable in their little house there in the forest.

The long winter passed slowly. Eliphalet trapped a little in his beaver meadow and along the creek, finished a log stable for the oxen, and cleared a couple of acres for a spring crop. It was a cruel process to get rid of the timber. He felled the trees, cut them up into lengths the oxen could manage, then with their help he rolled the logs into windrows for burning in the spring. Once he made a trip on foot to Ypsilanti, sixty miles away, for mail and a few needed supplies. It took all Mary's courage to decide she could stay alone during the days and nights of Eliphalet's absence.

The first two days passed quickly enough—she had lots of work to do. Then the third day came and in spite of work time moved so slowly, as it was ticked off by the old wooden clock they had brought with them. The next day, the fourth, as she sat sewing on a homespun coat, the door opened noiselessly and in stepped an Indian. For a moment her heart stood still she was so scared. But the man only

smiled and said "Me-gwetch!" which she knew was a friendly greeting. He walked to the kitchen table and laid a quarter of venison on it. Then from under his buckskin jacket he brought out a pair of dainty, beaded moccasins, and pointed to Mary's feet. "Squaw, squaw," he said over and over, in an effort to convey some message to her. At last Mary understood. A keener glance at the man showed her that she knew him; on the way in she remembered to have seen him at an Indian camp by the side of the trail. His baby was sick in the little bark wigwam and she had rendered some aid with the household remedies she knew. Later she was to see much of Me-teau, the friend of all the settlers.

At last Eliphalet returned with a few letters from the folks back home in distant York State, and his pack of groceries. He had lugged in fifty pounds over that winter trail for sixty miles. The frontier men, our great-grandfathers, were a tough and hardy breed.

The summer of 1829 brought in another family that located only a couple of miles away. Settlers were coming now, and covered wagons were creaking all the time along the Chicago Trail; they were the vanguard of that host of fifty or sixty thousand people who came

in the next ten years. It was good to see them; they were from that outside world that seemed so far away to Mary and Eliphalet.

Two or three more years slipped by. A few more acres were cleared on which grew wheat, corn, buckwheat and potatoes. Eliphalet had acquired a cow from a discouraged immigrant passing by, and a few pigs grunted in a pen. He would have had more but for a bear that stole two shotes in the early spring. There was also the sound of a baby's prattle in the house which people now knew far and wide as Judson's farm on the Chicago Trail.

In 1832 the cholera came following like a wolf-pack along the road from Detroit. People became panic stricken. Ypsilanti established an armed quarantine around her settlement, and "movers," as the immigrants were called, were turned back or forced to make a detour around the village. Acting-Governor Mason, on some important mission, was arrested and haled before the sheriff. Fortunately the dread disease left most of the solitary homesteads untouched, and the little home on the Chicago Road was spared.

Eliphalet is now an established member of the frontier community, a citizen of the new commonwealth emerging from the forest. His

door is wide open to every passing stranger, and even the vagrant Indians are never turned away. Whenever the Methodist circuit rider comes by there is always a lodging for man and beast. His neighbors recognize his worth. Back of that Yankee drawl of his they perceive a quick mind and rugged ability. He is chosen a member of the various conventions which meet to change Michigan Territory into Michigan, the state. And then, as is fitting, he is elected to the state House of Representatives, and rides to sessions in Detroit on the stage that now makes regular trips before his door. The railroad has crawled out from Detroit to Ypsilanti and beyond, but like many other of his day he does not quite trust "the tarnal thing."

When the Civil War came a good many of the hardships and much of the forest had disappeared. Prosperous villages and homes were scattered through the countryside. Eliphalet was too old to go to the war, but he sent two sons: one came back a captain, with a medal for valor on the battle-field, the other died in Andersonville prison.

Today the family is scattered far and wide, but the great-grandchildren in their annual reunions make a pilgrimage to a little country

cemetery on Route 112 and lay flowers on the graves of Eliphalet and Mary Judson. It was they and others like them, who carved Michigan out of the forests.

Runaway Slaves Greeting Union Soldiers

(From an Old Cut)

Chapter Nine

SOJOURNER TRUTH

Slave Woman

1797-1883

THUS far, the notable characters in this collection of Hero Tales have been white men or red. It is now left for us to tell the story of a black woman who came out of the darkness of slavery and became a leader of her people and her people's cause. Without any education, but moved by a holy zeal, she journeyed up and down the land, lecturing, appealing for the rights of men, and of black men, in particular. For many years she was one of the most remarkable citizens of our state, both for what she did and for what she was, and she deserves a place among the great, and especially among the good.

She was the daughter of James and Betsey, slaves of Colonel Ardinburgh of Ulster County, New York, and was born about 1797. She had no other name than Isabella; the name Sojourner Truth was one of her own adoption later in life. She was next to the youngest of

a large family, but all the older children were sold and scattered before she could remember. She never forgot the tears and grief of her slave parents over their lost children. Her little brother, next to her in age was sold by their master at the tender age of five.

At the death of Charles Ardinburgh, son of the Colonel, when she was nine years old, all the Ardinburgh property, lands, house, slaves, was struck off at public auction. Isabella was sold for a hundred dollars to John Nealy who lived in the same county. She was very miserable in her new home; she could speak nothing but Dutch, the language of the household where she was born, and the Nealys only English, and out of this situation came innumerable whippings, one of a severity that was like torture.

While with this family she managed to have a meeting with her father, old and decrepit now, and she told him all her troubles. He promised to have the slaves of the region speak a good word for her to their masters, and as a result she was sold again, this time for $155 to a man who owned a farm and a tavern. The work was hard here, but she was treated well enough, though the manners of the family were rough and profane. Under the influence of her

surroundings she gave up saying the Dutch prayers her parents had taught her. In 1810 she was sold once more to John Dumont for seventy pounds. She remained in this family till the year before she was freed by the State of New York in 1827.

Her master had promised to set her free of his own accord July 4, 1827, and she did all sorts of odd jobs for the household, looking forward to this event. She was married to a fellow slave named Joseph, and had children of her own now. The idea of freedom possessed her day and night, and finally she had a vision, as she thought from God, telling her to escape. This she did, and found a refuge in the home of a Mr. and Mrs. Van Wagener, who treated her with great kindness and sympathy. She remained with them for a year.

A little before this time, her little son around five years old was sold illegally out of the state and carried off to Alabama. She was like a mad woman in her despair. Some good Quakers took up the case for her, and the man who had sold the boy was forced to go South and bring him back to avoid prosecution and prison. During this time she had found refuge in prayer, and the return of her little son was like an answer from Heaven.

For the next twenty years this freedwoman's life was full of ups and downs. Her husband died a few years after his emancipation by the state in 1828, and she had herself and two young children to support. The oldest son, Peter, the one she had rescued from slavery in the South, was fending for himself, but getting into one scrape after another in New York City. At last a colored friend got him to ship on a whaler out of Nantucket. A few letters came from him in the next few years, written here and there over the oceans—the last one from a three-year cruise in 1841. He was never heard of again.

The mother went into service in New York City where she met a brother she had never seen before, and learned also of the death of her sister Nancy, a colored woman who was a member of her own church, and whom she had met frequently, not knowing who she was. "O Lord," she cried in her tears, "what is this slavery that it can do such dreadful things? What evil can it not do?" This was the way she became such a burning flame in the Anti-Slavery agitation of later years.

It was during these New York years that she became a member of a religious community that swallowed up all her savings which she

had drawn out of the savings bank to put into the general fund of the organization. White folk have also been the victims of such religious frauds and mismanagement. All this time she had been living up to one view of a religious life, but she at last grew dissatisfied with herself and her soul-experiences and decided to leave the city. June 1, 1843, she crossed over to Long Island. It was at this time that she gave herself the name of Sojourner, a wanderer who is tarrying in a strange land. Later, in order to have two names like ordinary people, she added the name Truth, calling herself Sojourner Truth, for, she said, it was the Truth she was going to proclaim.

President Lincoln and Sojourner Truth
(A War-Time Picture)

At this time began her public career which lasted till her death. She removed shortly

afterward to Battle Creek where a little settlement of colored folk had sprung up, and sallying forth from this town as a center she devoted herself to all the reform causes which were stirring people's souls before the Civil War. She was in the fore-front of the Anti-slavery movement and spoke from platforms side by side with William Lloyd Garrison, Bishop Haven, and Harriet Beecher Stowe. And she spoke with eloquence and effect, as everyone of that time testified.

During the Civil War she did much work in the hospitals and the Freedmen's camps around Washington. The following is from a letter she asked a friend to write for her. In it she describes her meeting with President Lincoln:

"Freedman's Village, Va., Nov., 1864.

"Dear Friend:

"I am at Freedman's Village. After visiting the President, I spent three weeks at Mrs. Swisshelm's, and held meetings in Washington, at Rev. Mr. Garnet's Presbyterian Church, for the benefit of the Colored Soldiers Aid Society. These meetings were successful in raising

funds. One week after that I went to Mason's Island and saw the freedmen there, and held several meetings, remained a week and was present at the celebration of the emancipation of the slaves of Maryland, and spoke on that occasion.

"It was about 8 o'clock, A. M., when I called on the President. Upon entering his reception room we found about a dozen persons in waiting, among them two colored women. I had quite a pleasant time waiting until he was disengaged, and enjoyed his conversation with others; he showed as much kindness and consideration to the colored persons as to the whites—if there was any difference, more. One case was that of a colored woman who was sick and likely to be turned out of her house on account of her inability to pay the rent. The President listened to her with much attention, and spoke to her with kindness and tenderness. He said he had given so much he could give no more, but told her where to go and get the money, and asked Mrs. C. to assist her, which she did.

"The President was seated at his desk. Mrs. C. said to him, 'This is Sojourner Truth, who has come all the way from Michigan to see you.' He then arose, gave me his hand, made

a bow, and said, 'I am pleased to see you.' "

"I said to him, 'Mr. President, when you first took your seat I feared you would be torn to pieces, for I likened you unto Daniel who was thrown into the lions' den; and if the lions did not tear you into pieces, I knew that it would be God who had saved you; and I said if He spared me I would see you before the four years expired, and He has done so, and now I am here to see you for myself.' "

. . . . . .

"He then showed me the Bible presented to him by the colored people of Baltimore, of which you have no doubt seen a description. . . I must say, and I am proud to say, that I never was treated by anyone with more kindness and cordiality than were shown to me by that great and good man, Abraham Lincoln, by the grace of God president of the United States for four years more. He took my little book, and with the same hand that signed the death warrant of slavery, he wrote as follows:

" 'For Aunty Sojourner Truth,
" Oct. 29, 1864. A. Lincoln.' "

. . . "Give my love to all who inquire for me, and tell my friends to direct all things for

me to the care of Capt. George B. Carse, Freedman's Village, Va. Ask Mr. Oliver Johnson to please send me the *Standard* while I am here, as many of the colored people like to hear what is going on, and to know what is being done for them. Sammy, my grandson, reads for them. We are both well and happy, and feel that we are in good employment. I find plenty of friends.

"Your friend,

"Sojourner Truth."

Sojourner Truth spent more than a year at Arlington Heights, near Washington, instructing freed women in the ways of their new existence. While here she met and knew Mrs. Laura Haviland, a Michigan woman, who was greatly interested in the Freedmen's work. A statue of Mrs. Haviland stands in the city of Adrian.

After the war she still kept up her interest in her people, and made extensive lecture trips to every part of the North. The newspapers of the country were uniformly friendly and gave her appearance anywhere wide publicity. The following from a Fall River paper will show their attitude:

. . Sojourner Truth had a good audience at the Christian Church last evening, and delivered a very unique and inter-

esting address. Many more would have attended had they been aware how pleasantly the evening would have been spent in company with the aged philosopher. Her theme was the duty of the North to the emancipated negroes. Many of her photographs were purchased. It is not impossible she may speak again during her stay here.

The year 1874 was a sad one for her. Her grandson, Samuel Banks, who acted as secretary to his grandmother, died after a long illness. She herself was ill all that winter, but recovered to live on in her life of poverty, prayer, and public service. Her "Book of Life," as she called it, was of much comfort to her. It was filled with autographs, letters and sentiments from distinguished people who had supported her in her work. Calvin Fairbanks, who spent twelve years in prison for helping a slave to escape, had written this in it:

"Dear Friend—Your life is a living epistle known and read of all men. You surely are a sojourner, laboring for the truth. Your life has been one of sorrow and toil, bearing in your own body and your own family the bitter injustice and cruelty that has sent you a missionary to the learned and unlearned alike for many years. You and I have cause of

sympathy, each with the other. God bless and keep you ever.

"Florence, Mass., March 20, 1871."

But her long and strenuous life was soon to be over. She died in 1883, in Battle Creek where she was buried. A tombstone, reared by public subscription, marks her grave.

The Custer Statue at Monroe

Chapter Ten

GEORGE ARMSTRONG CUSTER

Dashing Cavalry Soldier

1839-1876

THE Civil War was so long ago that now only men who are more than eighty can tell about it. A few old men, a very few, are still alive who bring out a flaming red necktie on war anniversary days, and as they stroke its silky folds murmur something about Michigan's famous cavalry and the gallant boy general who led it.

"As, yes, General Custer—I can see him now, sitting on his horse in front of his men ready for the charge, his yellow hair falling on his shoulders, and the band playing, 'The Girl I Left Behind Me.' Then there comes a break in the music, and with a cry of 'Charge!' he spurs forward, followed by the thunder of the trampling horses and the yells of the men swinging their sabres. Yes, that is the way the Michigan Cavalry Brigade and Custer rode upon the enemy."

Youthful reader, your great-grandfather

may be saying that perhaps. If he is, listen well, for his is a voice of long, long ago.

George Armstrong Custer was born in eastern Ohio, December 5, 1839. His father was a blacksmith, and also a small farmer, and the boy knew the meaning of country life. His half-sister lived in Monroe, Michigan, and from the age of ten he spent his summers on the farm in Ohio, and his winters in school in Michigan. Later his parents moved to Monroe.

In May, 1856, he applied to the congressman of the district in Ohio where his father's farm was located for appointment to West Point. Another applicant was ahead of him, but the next year, 1857, he was successful and entered the famous school in June. He did not distinguish himself as a student, and was never counted a "prize cadet." Strange thing: the commandant of the academy was killed at Gettysburg, and two of Custer's classmates became major-generals of Confederate cavalry. The war rent asunder many such friendships.

Upon his graduation in 1861 he reported in Washington and was assigned to the Second United States Cavalry, with rank of second lieutenant. The very next day he was in the battle of Bull Run, the first battle of the Civil War. For a time his career moved slowly.

In 1862 he was still a second lieutenant, now transferred to the Fifth United States Cavalry. In the campaigns of that year he was cited for bravery two or three times, and was taken finally onto the staff of General McClellan, commander-in-chief of the army, with the rank of captain. In the spring of 1863 he was ordered back to the Fifth Cavalry, with his old grade of lieutenant, but important advancement was just ahead of him. He was soon detailed as aide to General Pleasanton, chief of cavalry, and at the battle of Aldie so distinguished himself that he was promoted that same month to brigadier-general of volunteers. This was June 29, 1863, when he was twenty-three years old.

He was at once given the command of the Michigan Cavalry Brigade, the "red-necktie regiments," and at once led it in a series of brilliant engagements in the Gettysburg campaign. On the 3rd of July occurred the great cavalry fight at Rummel's Farm which saved the flank of the Northern army, when General Pickett made the desperate but glorious attack upon the center of our line. It was this battle which showed that General Custer, youth though he was, was a brilliant cavalry leader.

It was the forenoon of October 11, 1863,

before Brandy Station. The four regiments of Custer's brigade were resting mounted behind a slope near the crest of which towered a solitary and commanding pine tree. Over the hill, out of sight, lay the enemy, and their fire was raking the top.

General Custer called out:

"Who will volunteer to crawl up to that tree and report what the Rebels are doing over there?"

A slim youth, a color-bearer on the General's staff, rode out of the line.

"General. I'll go."

It was said with easy manner of one boy talking to another.

The gallant leader put his gloved hand on the youngster's shoulder, and answered with a smile:

"All right, go, but be careful."

The boy crawled as far as he could safely, then leaped to his feet and made a head-long dash for the tree. A quick glance showed him that the Confederates were alarmed and falling back. He waved his hat, and in a trice the Brigade thundered by in the attack, making the ground tremble. The youth who volunteered that day was the author's father, of Company M, Fifth Michigan Cavalry.

In the winter of 1864 General Custer came back to Monroe, Michigan, to be married. He had his long yellow curls cut off before the ceremony. He took his young bride back to the war with him, and ever after she followed him in all his campaigns, as close to the front as possible.

The summer and winter of 1864 were a long series of brilliant battles. He was under the command of General Sheridan and made glorious history with the Michigan Cavalry Brigade. When Lee surrendered at Appomattox, it was Custer who received the flag of truce.

In the reorganization of the regular army after the Civil War, Custer was made a lieutenant-colonel and placed in actual command of the Seventh Cavalry and at once transferred to the plains to take part in the Indian wars. In 1868 he won a decisive victory over the Cheyennes at Washita in Indian Territory. After two years in garrison with his regiment in Kentucky he moved to Dakota where the Sioux under Sitting Bull and Crazy Horse were leading a dangerous revolt. From Fort Lincoln on the Missouri near Bismark he took an active part in expeditions to the Black Hills and along the Yellowstone. Mrs. Custer who

was with him as much as the dangers of the times permitted describes very entertainingly their wild life on the plains. The following paragraphs are taken here and there from her book, *Boots and Saddles:*

"It was always a mild excitement and new pleasure to select camp. . . When the command arrived, the guidons pointed out the location for each company; the horses were unsaddled and picketed out; the wagons unloaded and the tents pitched. The hewing of wood and the hauling of water came next, and after the cook-fires were lighted, the air was full of savory odors of the soldiers' dinner.

"Sometimes the ground admitted of pitching the tents of the whole regiment in two long lines facing each other; the wagons were drawn up at either end, and also at the rear of the two rows of tents; they were placed diagonally, the end of one overlapping the end of the next wagon, so as to form a barricade against the attack of Indians. Down the center of the company street large ropes were stretched, to which the horses were tied at night. Our tents were usually a little apart from the rest, at one end of the company street, and it never grew to be an old story to watch the camp before us."

. . . . . .

"Our first visitor from the Agency Indians was Fool Dog, a Sioux chief. He was tall, commanding, and had really a fine face. When he was ready to go home he invited us to come to his village before we left on our next march. At twilight my husband and I walked over. The village was a collection of teepees of all sizes, the largest being what is called the Medicine Lodge, where the councils are held. It was formed of tanned buffalo hides, sewed together with buckskin thongs, and stretched over a collection of thirty-six poles. These poles are of great value to the Indians, for in a sparsely timbered country like Dakota it is difficult to find suitable trees. It is necessary to go a great distance to procure the kind of sapling that is light and pliable and yet sufficiently strong for the purpose. The poles are lashed together at the tops and radiate in a circle below.

"The smoke was pouring out of the opening above, and the only entrance to the teepee was a round aperture near the ground, sufficiently large to allow a person to crawl in. . . The sound of music came from within; I crept tremblingly in after the general, not entirely quieted by his keeping my hand in his and whispering something to calm my fears as I

sat on the buffalo robe beside him. In the first place, I knew how resolute the Indians were in never admitting one of their own women to council, and their curious eyes and forbidding expressions towards me did not add to my comfort. . . Fool Dog arose from the circle of what composed their nobility and solemnly shook hands with the general; those next in rank followed his example. The pipe was then smoked, and the general had to take a whiff when it came his turn. Fortunately we escaped the speeches, for we had not brought an interpreter."

. . . . . .

"Fort Lincoln was built with quarters for six companies. The barracks for the soldiers were on the side of the parade-ground nearest the river, while seven detached houses for officers faced the river opposite. On the left of the parade-ground was the long granary and the little military prison, called the 'guard-house.' Opposite, completing the square, were the quartermaster and commissary storehouses for supplies and the adjutant's office. Outside the garrison proper, near the river, were the stables for six hundred horses. Still further beyond were the quarters for the laundresses,

easily traced by the swinging clothes-lines in front, and called for this season 'Suds Row.' Some distance on from there were the log huts of the Indian scouts and their families, while on the same side also was the level plain used for parades and drill. On the left of the post was the sutler's store, with a billiard room attached. Soon after the general arrived he permitted a citizen to put up a barber shop, and afterwards another built a little cabin of cottonwood, with a canvas roof, for a photographer's establishment."

General
George Armstrong Custer

. . . . . .

"My husband was enchanted to have a room entirely for his own use. . . He filled it with the trophies of the chase. Over the mantel a buffalo's head plunged, seemingly, out of the wall. (Buffaloes were rare in Dakota, but this was one the general had killed from the only herd he had seen on the campaign.) The head

of the first grizzly that he had shot, with its open jaws and great fang-like teeth, looked fiercely down on the pretty, meek-faced jack-rabbits on the mantel. Several antelope heads were also on the walls. One had a mark in its throat where the general had shot him at a distance of six hundred yards. The head of a beautiful black-tail deer was another souvenir of a hunt the general had made with Bloody Knife, the favorite Indian scout. When they sighted the deer they agreed to fire together, the Indian selecting the head, the general taking the heart. They fired simultaneously and the deer fell, the bullets entering head and heart. The scout could not repress a grunt of approval, as the Indian considers the white man greatly his inferior as a hunter or a marksman.

"A sandhill crane, which is very hard to bring down, stood on a pedestal by itself. A mountain eagle, a yellow fox, and a tiny fox with a brush—called out there a swift—were disposed of in different corners. Over his desk, claiming a perch by itself on a pair of deer antlers, was a great white owl. On the floor before the fireplace was spread the immense

skin of a grizzly bear. On a wide lounge at one corner of the room my husband used to throw himself down on the cover of a Mexican blanket, often with a dog for a pillow. The camp chairs had the skins of beavers and American lions thrown over them. A stand for arms in one corner held a collection of pistols, hunting-knives, Winchester and Springfield rifles, shot-guns and carbines, and even an old flint-lock musket as a variety. From antlers above hung sabres, spurs, riding-whips, gloves and caps, field-glasses, the map case, and the great compass used on the marches."

In the spring of 1876 General Sheridan, Custer's old cavalry commander now in charge of military affairs in the West, planned operations on a big scale to crush the rebellious Indians once for all. Three expeditions were launched from different directions at the same time, and they expected to join forces in a concerted attack upon Sitting Bull and his five or six thousand followers who were thought to be in camp near where the Rosebud flows into the Yellowstone. Custer and his Seventh Cavalry were under General Terry, and the middle of June found the troops in the Indian country. Scouts brought in the news that Sitting Bull and that clever and able warrior,

Crazy Horse, had set up their camp on the west bank of the Little Big Horn. We want to quote now the last letters ever written by General Custer. They are only brief notes from the field.

"Mouth of Rosebud, June 21, 1876.

". . . Look on my map and you will find our present location on the Yellowstone, about midway between Tongue River and the Big Horn.

"The scouting party has returned. They saw the trail and deserted camp of a village of three hundred and eighty lodges. The trail was about a week old. The scouts reported that they could have overtaken the village in one day and a half. I am now going to take up the trail where the scouting party turned back. I fear their failure to follow up the Indians has imperiled our plans by giving the village an intimation of our presence. Think of the valuable time lost! But I feel hopeful of accomplishing great results. I will move directly up the valley of the Rosebud. General Gibbon's command and General Terry, with steamer, will proceed up the Big Horn as far as the boat can go. . . I like campaigning with pack-mules much better than with wagons,

leaving out the question of luxuries. We take no tents, and desire none.

"I now have some Crow scouts with me, as they are familiar with the country. They are magnificent-looking men, so much handsomer and more Indian-like than any we have ever seen, and so jolly and sportive; nothing of the gloomy, silent red men about them. They have formally given themselves to me, after the usual talk. In their speech they said they had heard that I never abandoned a trail; that when my food gave out I ate mule. That was the kind of a man they wanted to fight under; they were willing to eat mule too.

"I am going to send six Ree scouts to Powder River with the mail; from there it goes to Fort Buford. . .

"June 22—11 A. M.

". . . I have but a few moments to write, as we move at twelve, and I have my hands full of preparations for the scout. . . Do not be anxious about me. You will be surprised to know how closely I obey your instructions about keeping with the column. I hope to have a good report to send you by the next mail. . . . . A success will start us all towards (Fort) Lincoln. . ."

Custer and his cavalry were ordered ahead to prevent the Indians from turning eastward, and after hard marches they came into contact with them on the morning of the 25th of June. He at once divided his command into three divisions, three troops in charge of Major Reno, three troops under Captain Benteen, five troops he kept for himself. What happened after that can never be fully known. Benteen and Reno failed to come up with Custer at the proper time; and fighting desperately Custer who met the very center of the Indian attack fell with all his men. His brother Tom and his brother-in-law were also among the dead.

On the 5th of July a steamer came down the Missouri, bearing many wounded and news of the disaster. As Mrs. Custer so pathetically says, "This battle wrecked the lives of twenty-six women at Fort Lincoln, and orphan children of officers and men joined their cry to that of their bereaved mothers."

The brave Sioux looked upon General Custer, the Chief with the Yellow Hair, as a mighty warrior, and they left his body untouched and unplundered upon the field. It was at first buried where it lay, but later it was

removed from the banks of the Little Big Horn to find new sepulchre at West Point where his soldiering began.

Peter White as an Old Man

Chapter Eleven

PETER WHITE

Grand Old Man of the Upper Peninsula

1830-1908

MICHIGAN was settled by a sturdy class of pioneers who carried their industry, courage, and a belief in the future of the wilderness, to every corner of the two peninsulas. But some of these hardy men tower far above the mass, and one such was the giant character, Peter White. His life is a part of the history of that great land of iron and copper and forests which lies beyond the Straits.

Peter White was born in Rome, Oneida County, New York, October 31, 1830. It was his grandfather who hoisted over Fort Stanwix, August 6, 1777, the new flag of the United States made of alternate stripes of red and white, with thirteen stars on a field of blue.

When he was nine years old his parents moved to Green Bay, Wisconsin, and henceforth he belonged to the Great Lakes country.

He got some schooling during these years, but adventure was in his blood, and at fifteen he turned up at Mackinaw Island, at that time the center of trade and enterprise on the Lakes. In a short time he went on to the Sault, bound up Lake Superior to have a share in the copper boom. But he could not get a passage, and shipped instead on the schooner *Bela Hubbard* to Detroit. He made a half dozen trips, then spent a year clerking in a store on Jefferson Avenue. Later he was back at Mackinaw Island, working summers in the lighthouse service, winters being handy man in a trader's store. At odd times, he managed to get in a little more schooling. Altogether he spent two years on Mackinaw Island. The romance of the place with its memories of French and Indian days clung to him to the end of his life.

In 1849 young Peter engaged to go to the iron country for twelve dollars a month. To do this, he surrendered a job at Mackinaw worth thirty-five, but he believed his future lay in that great peninsula just starting into activity. The party made their way in a barge along the shore of Lake Superior to Indian Town, later known as Marquette. Two log houses and a few Indian wigwams stood there.

As the tired and hungry company beached

their boat on the shore at Jackson's Landing, an Indian greeted them. It was Chief Ka-baw-gam, son of Chief Sha-wa-no of the Sault, last of the tribal leaders of the Chippewas. He asked the hungry men to his lodge where his squaw Charlotte cooked a supper of venison, wild duck, fish, potatoes, bread and coffee. Such a meal was worth all the hardships of Lake Superior!

In January, 1903, Chief Ka-baw-gam died at the age of a hundred and was buried from the Catholic Cathedral in Marquette. Peter White was principal mourner at the funeral where he paid a last tribute to his old friend of fifty years before.

From the lake shore the party packed in to where the so-called Cleveland mine was located, and there Peter went to work. After a few weeks he was back in Indian Town helping to build a dock on which to unload machinery for the mine. The little settlement on the shore was at first called Worcester, but soon took the name Marquette, which it wears so proudly at this day. Months went by; Peter was working now as time keeper, now as guide through the woods to Escanaba, now as manager of the Marquette Iron Company's

store. Inhabitants were pouring in, lured by wages and wealth in the new industry.

In the fall of 1850, it was decided there must be a regular mail with the outside world, and at a meeting the sum of $1200 was subscribed to pay a winter carrier to L'Anse, where the mail came in overland from the south. Peter White bid for the job—the money looked good to him. In after years he and his phantom dog team became a legend to be related by the French Canadians around their forest campfires. He made nine trips in all, but the $1200 never materialized. For one reason or another the subscribers to the fund did not pay. All he got out of it was hardened muscles and a wonderful skill in the woods.

In the spring of 1852, the first mail to arrive brought young Peter White a bulky envelope from Washington. He was naturally surprised, but the contents surprised him more: he was appointed postmaster at Carp River, a suburb, as it were, of the new town of Marquette. A few months later the government abolished the office at Marquette, and Peter White was sole postmaster of the settlement. Later he had the name of the office officially changed to Marquette, and he continued in office for a dozen years. He was not

yet twenty-one years old when his appointment was made in Washington.

The iron mining industry was developing. In 1852 Peter White shipped six barrels of ore to the Jackson Iron Company; in 1853 the Cleveland Company shipped out 152 tons. Peter did not have capital enough to go into the mining business, but he saw opportunities for successful trade all around him. He opened a supply store; he began to do a little banking in a small way; he dealt in real estate. In 1855 the first ship canal at the Sault was opened at a cost of a million dollars, and this gave added impetus to business along the Lake Superior shore. Peter White was on the alert.

In 1855 he was elected to the legislature as a representative, who should watch over the interests of the Marquette settlement in the distribution of lands granted by the general government. It took Peter White fifteen days to reach Lansing. He traveled on snowshoes to Escanaba, and by stage and on foot the rest of the way.

Events around Marquette were moving rapidly now. In 1857 a steam railroad was built from the shore to the iron mines inland. The same year Peter White was made register of the land office which was taken away from

the Sault. There is also another event of the year 1857 in which he figured—the records show that he was married September 29. It was now that he became a lawyer. His studies were carried on after hours, but he got what he went after. The Supreme Court of the United States admitted him to practice before it, a coveted privilege. He kept his law offices for ten years, then other interests absorbed him.

When the Civil War came, Peter White was easily Marquette's first citizen. His bank had become a national bank, and his ventures in real estate were successful. The heart of Marquette is built on thirteen acres he originally owned. He was also selling much iron through his connection with the Bancroft furnace. As the war drifted on, he became convinced that there would soon be a demand for vast quantities of iron to feed into reviving industries. He started down the Lakes. At Detroit he found some of his own iron on the docks, and he promptly bought it up. He bought all he could find everywhere. Then he went on to Cleveland.

"Do you want any pig iron" asked Peter White of the Otis Foundry Company.

"We want all we can get, and will pay $42 a ton for it."

"All right, I have a thousand tons."

That day Peter White cleared $18,000, and $35,000 before the week was over. The beginnings of his vast fortune were in this iron ore business.[1]

There is a war-time story which throws an interesting side-light on Peter White's character, and incidentally on the character of another man as well.

One Sunday afternoon in 1864, a distinguished gentleman came ashore from a steamer in Marquette. He was on his way to Canada and wanted to change some paper money into gold. Somebody on the dock pointed out to him Peter White, the local banker. The stranger introduced himself and stated his wish, and Mr. White, quick to render a service, asked him to step over to his bank. Mr. White found the teller who lived upstairs and explained the matter and asked him to open the vault. The teller refused;

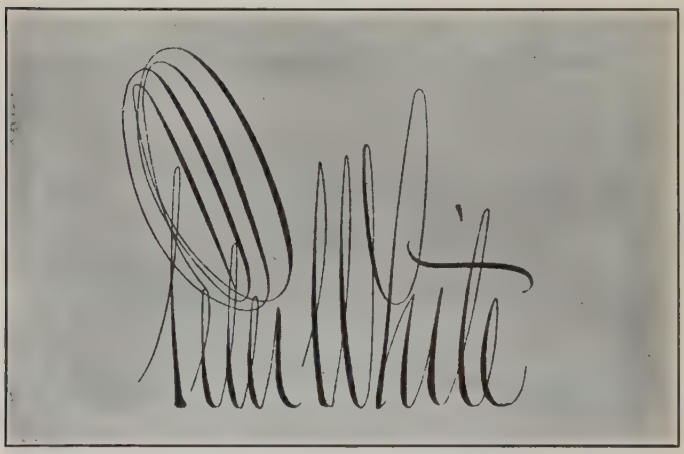
"I do not believe business of any sort should be transacted on Sunday."

The stranger said the steamer would soon leave and that the matter was unusual and

[1] For the episode just related, as well as many other facts of Mr. White's life, I am indebted to *The Honorable Peter White, A Biographical Sketch of the Lake Superior Iron Country,* by Ralph D. Williams.

urgent. But nothing could move the teller in the face of his religious convictions.

Then Mr. White asked for the combination to the vault, saying he would open it himself, but here again the teller was stubborn and refused to budge. He would not be a party in any way to any sort of Sunday business. Peter



Peter White's Famous Signature

White and his caller went away, forced to find the money elsewhere.

The next morning the teller handed in his resignation, thinking Mr. White would not desire his services any longer. But he was mistaken. "I'll not discharge you for sticking to your principles," said Mr. White; "I don't

think you used very good judgment, but I admire you for following your convictions."

When the teller later set up in business for himself, Mr. White loaned him ten thousand dollars without security.

For the next thirty years Peter White took a prominent part in all the activities of his city and peninsula. He was the head of a big insurance business; he dealt in lands, timber, and ore; he saw a fine city grow up around him, largely on acres he had owned. With all his business connections, he found time for civic and public interests. He went down to the state legislature again for one term in the senate; he gave a library to the city of Marquette; he aided churches of every faith, all the time an Episcopalian himself; he helped establish St. Luke's Hospital. He secured Presque Isle, the finest city park in the United States.

The story of the getting of Presque Isle is typical of the man. The great rocky, forest-covered knob of three hundred twenty-three acres, almost surrounded by the cool waters of Lake Superior, had been in Mr. White's thought a long time. What a park it would make for the city! But alas, it was United States Government land, held for a lighthouse or something, as Washington mysteriously

hinted, and so there did not seem to be much of a prospect to get it.

At last Peter White went to Washington and saw the House Committee on Public Lands. It was made up of six Democrats and seven Republicans, and Peter was a Democrat. The committee was unwilling to act favorably. Then he saw his old friend, Senator Palmer, of Detroit. A few senators were called in; they listened to Peter White's request, and came under the magic of his personality. A bill giving Presque Isle to the city of Marquette was passed at once by the Senate. He now went back to the House Committee, who were not so reluctant now and so the bill was passed in the House. Then Peter White took the bill to the President who signed it, and with a copy of it in his pocket he left for home. Today, Presque Isle is the playground of the city and of the region.

Honors and public recognition for the Grand Old Man of the North were not lacking. He was appointed a commissioner of the World's Fair in 1893. In 1900, he was the principal speaker at the semi-centennial celebration of the Cleveland Iron Company. That same year the University of Michigan, of which he was a regent, conferred upon him the degree of

Master of Arts. In 1902, the science building of the new Normal School was named the Peter White Hall of Science. Without many school advantages himself, he was a profound believer in education. He was a member of the school board at Marquette for fifty-five years.

In 1905 occurred the semi-centennial celebration of the canal at the Sault, an event for which Peter White had worked long and faithfully. He went to Washington and secured an appropriation of $10,000; then he repaired to Lansing where the legislature went into open session to hear him. He came away with $15,000 here. No one knows how much of his own money went into the project. It was a great occasion and marked by many speeches and addresses by distinguished people. Here are the closing words of Mr. White's address on the development of the Lake Superior country.

"This vast land-locked sea with all its tributaries is free, and its freedom means these infinite results, the greatest addition to freedom since freedom came. And we who have seen its development, and have worked the forests and mines which have chiefly made its commerce, may pause in wonder that so few and so feeble a people living under so cold a

sky should have been permitted to share so largely in changing the seat of empire, and enlarging the happiness of the world.

"Who that celebrate this mighty triumph can forget the men who dreamed it, and the men who made it? Governor Mason had it in his mind, but failed to bring it to pass. A great thought is next in honor to a great deed. We have Charles T. Harvey, the builder of the first lock, with us today. General Weitzel, who built the first enlarged lock, was the officer who took possession of captured Richmond. Poe, whose name adorns the largest lock, was famous on many a stricken battlefield. Both wrought themselves as well as their names into these locks, and both were capable of more. If men, whose genius made these locks, and men whose genius urged on, expanded, and used them, were named together, it would prove that peace is greater than war, that commerce is the handmaid of peace, and if the men of the twentieth century outstrip those of the nineteenth, who wrought this wonder, the race of giants must return."

Peter White died June 6, 1908, while on a trip to Detroit. People of both peninsulas felt the bereavement. The Grand Old Man had lived so long and accomplished so much, and

made so many friends, that his death struck far and wide. Bishop Williams in a memorial sermon expressed this common sense of loss:

"Let it be then no passing grief that we commemorate, but let it become our great tradition. Here too a great and good man laid foundations. When we mention him, let us say as they said of Christopher Wren: 'If you want to see his monument, look around you.' . . . And then to our last descendants in homely phrase of our own, 'Had you known him, children, you would have known him for a friend. He would have showed you that it is heavenly gentleness that makes men great.' He loved all our living and our dead. We know, for we have clasped his hand, we have seen him smile, we have seen him weep.

"Lord, keep his memory green."

The Ford Plant at the River Rouge

Chapter Twelve

HENRY FORD

Automobile Maker for the World

1863

A HERO is not necessarily a person who has played a great part in some strange adventure, or on the battlefield. And a hero-tale need not be an account of wonderful deeds. No, a hero may be one who believes in his own ability, faces the odds and tasks of his daily life squarely, and by industry, intelligence, and genius captures a great idea and makes it the servant of mankind. That is the reason why we have put the story of Henry Ford among the Hero Tales of Michigan. It is a true story which reads like romance; as a record of achievement, it is unsurpassed by any of the deeds of great adventure. Michigan is the setting of the story. Henry Ford is a native son, and the fame of what he has accomplished belongs to Michigan.

Henry Ford was born in the days of the Civil War near Dearborn, on a farm, which is now a part of his great estate. His father was an

Irish immigrant who had settled near the great highway that led from Detroit westward into the state. It was hardly more than a trail through the woods then, but long processions of covered wagons were following it day and night, bringing settlers in an endless throng. The railroad paralleled it in 1838 as far as the village of Dearborn, and the grade was completed westward to Ypsilanti. Little did the Irish pioneer think as he watched the moving wagons and the steam cars that his son would revolutionize both the highway and the railway.

The boy Henry attended the country school which was two and a half miles from his home. He walked back and forth with his brothers and sisters. There was no course of study in that time, no grades, no graduation. Pupils began when they could, and finished when they were old enough to have read through the McGuffey Readers. Henry Ford was through the district school by the time he was a big boy. He had no more time for school. Work was waiting for him. He went into Detroit, the big city near by, to find it.

As a youth, Henry had always had a fondness for machinery; watches, mill-wheels, steam engines, farm implements, interested

him. When he went to Detroit he found employment in a plant that manufactured steam engines. He received $2.50 a week, but he repaired watches for a jeweler to help out his wages. This shop work in Detroit was the proper training for him; it brought him into contact with the practical side of mechanics.

However, he returned to the home farm after about a year in the city. His father's health was poor, and Henry was needed to help manage affairs. Reluctantly he went home, but his dreams were not yet ended. In fact, the greatest vision of his life was just ahead of him.

A few years slipped by on the home farm. He fell in love with a girl of the neighborhood and married her. This was in 1888. His father gave him eighty acres of land and timber enough to cut into lumber for his house. Now he was a prosperous young farmer; his fields were fertile and his buildings commodious and attractive. He still dreamt in terms of machinery, and operated saw mills, installed steam engines, tried his hand at making a steam tractor. But every time the whistle of the Michigan Central trains reached his ears he was lost in thought; he kept revolving in his mind the idea of a horseless carriage, a vehicle

that could furnish its own power, and operate on the highways. This vision drew him back to the city.

Henry Ford was twenty-eight years old when he went to Detroit the second time. He secured a position in the Edison Company plant. His hopes and dreams, however, were centered in a little red brick barn in the rear of his house on Bagley Street. There he experimented on a two-cylinder gas engine which should furnish motive power to a carriage. In 1893 the trial performance came. It was two o'clock of a rainy April morning when Henry Ford climbed into this new vehicle. The streets were deserted, the world was still asleep. The engine was set in motion, and there came sputtering, crackling explosions. Then the car moved away—it worked.

Henry Ford did not lose his head over his success, for really he had not succeeded yet; he had only begun to succeed. He still continued his work for the Edison Company as chief engineer, now at $125 a month. An inventor has to live, and there is nothing like a steady job to live on. Ambitious plans may feed the soul, but not one's family. Therefore, he still continued with the Edison Company. He was

advised to give up his interest and experimenting in gas engines, and devote himself to electricity. Here was a force which was to revolutionize the world. Nobody foresaw the mighty part gasoline was to play in human progress.

Nevertheless Henry Ford believed in the future of the gas engine, so much so that he gave up his employment with the Edison Company. He had come to a crossroads, and he took his own direction. This was in 1898, and he was thirty-five years old.

In 1899 the Detroit Automobile Company was formed, with Henry Ford as chief engineer and one-sixth owner. But it was not easy sailing. He wanted to build a light, convenient, comfortable car that the man of small means could own, a car for the millions, rather than for the millionaires. He soon left the newly organized company, and in 1903 we see the Ford Motor Company coming into existence, with capital stock of $100,000 divided into a thousand shares, of which Henry Ford was credited with 255. The paid-in capital amounted to only $28,000. His position was that of general manager. At the age of forty Henry Ford was now in charge of his own company, turning out the car of his dreams.

In less than four months the company had made more than $40,000 profit; by the end of the first year, 1700 cars had been sold, and the profits were almost $250,000.

The Ford Motor Company was now an accomplished fact. Still things did not yet go to suit Henry Ford. Sales did not increase in the next two or three years, and there was

Henry Ford and His Guests of the
Edison Celebration at Dearborn

a big lawsuit in which the company was charged with infringing the Selden patent. Mr. Ford decided to gain control of the company himself and push the manufacture of cars "for everybody,"—his favorite industrial theory. Accordingly, he bought out Malcolm-

son who was the other large stockholder, and became owner of a majority interest at last. Under his methods the sales now increased so that in 1907, 8423 cars were sold, five times as many as during the year before. 1400 men were employed and the profits had reached a million dollars a year.

Ford car owners all remember the famous "Model T" which is just now disappearing from the roads. It was a revolution in car making. It had a left-hand drive, a cylinder of new process steel cast in one block, and with a removable top. The result was a strong, light car, which immediately became immensely popular. Of course, critics and rivals laughed and derided it, but Model T stood every test. In 1909 the volume of business was tremendous; 10,000 cars were sold, and "everybody" began to send in orders.

In the meantime the famous Selden patent case was decided against the Ford Motor Company, but Henry Ford did not surrender, and carried the legal battle further. In 1911 he finally won, and the output of cars jumped to 35,000. His new factory at Highland Park was too small, though it covered thirty-two acres. Production was increasing by leaps and bounds. In 1913 it was 168,000 cars; in 1914,

248,307; in 1916, 472,353. Model T began its career at $850; in 1913 it was selling for $550, but profits increased faster than ever. Mr. Ford was now giving his employees an eight-hour day, with five dollars as lowest wage.

We now approach the most remarkable part in the remarkable story of Henry Ford's rise in the industrial world. It had to do with the enormous profits of the business. In spite of the fact that the stockholders drew a dividend of five percent a month, an excess of undivided profits was piling up. In 1915-16 the report showed about sixty millions of profit, with cash on hand of more than fifty millions. Mr. Ford wanted to use the surplus earnings to develop a new and greater plant at the River Rouge. His associates were opposed, and Ford decided to buy them out and make the whole business his own affair. This meant borrowing seventy million dollars, but the company would be a Ford company, lock, stock and barrel. And so he did it.

Henry Ford now broadened out operations still further. He bought ships, and railroads, and coal fields. In the Upper Peninsula of Michigan he bought great tracts of hardwood forest and established saw mills. The World War was still dragging its weary way; labor

was scarce, and Henry Ford raised his men's wages to $6 a day and reduced still more the price of Model T. But as the times grew harder, and money scarcer, sales fell off. And it was sales that had kept the Ford Motor Company going. In 1921 the Ford Motor Company had more than fifty millions of obligations to meet, and where was the money? People began to talk; Henry Ford had sailed too high, he had been too ambitious, he had overreached himself. Here was the end of his great dream!

But it was not the end. Henry Ford had foreseen the coming pinch and had his own way to meet it. His Model T was the answer. He had accumulated a great stock of these cars in the slack times, and he now persuaded (perhaps with pressure) his dealers all over the country to stock up with new cars which he sent out in monthly quantities. In this way he collected twenty-five millions. In other ways he scraped together fourteen millions more; in this way he had money enough to pay his bills and save his credit. He had survived where people said he would fail.

Old Model T was in the ten millions by 1924, and the price was down to $290. It had three more years to live; but when, on May 26, 1927,

the fifteen millionth one dropped from the assembly line, its career was ended, though not forgotten. Its making, in one way or another, had given employment to hundreds of thousands of men; it had made billions for dealers; it had found its way to the ends of the earth; it had carried millions of people, on pleasure or business bent. It had served well its day and generation.

Henry Ford now began to build over his great plant at the Rouge for the new car that was to follow. It was known as the Model A, and when it appeared, even the severest critics voted that it looked like a car, a real automobile! The flivver had disappeared forever.

We have carried this wonder story almost to the end. The great Ford plant at the River Rogue is now the sole producing factory—the old Highland Park factory has been abandoned to other uses. At Dearborn, beyond where the laboratories are, stretches a vast air-port, with Ford-Stout planes coming and going, like martins around their nesting place. In the same enclosure farther to the left is a collection of buildings—some reproductions, some old and brought from great distances—which turn one's thoughts into the past. Independence

Hall is there, and an old tavern, a mill, a pioneer log-house, an old-fashioned country store. Not far away is Smith's Creek Station, moved there bodily from up toward Port Huron. Henry Ford wanted to honor his old friend, Thomas Edison, and so brought to his antique village not only the railroad station where he was put off the train for too much experimenting with electrical apparatus, but also Edison's original laboratory at Menlo Park, New Jersey.

In October, 1929, the Golden Jubilee of Light was celebrated in the old village which Henry Ford has reproduced at Dearborn. Thomas Edison was guest of honor—it was the fiftieth anniversary of his invention of the incandescent electric light. The President of the United States, Mr. Hoover, and other distinguished visitors, were present to do honor to Mr. Ford's guest, and to Mr. Ford himself.

Not far away from the scene of that celebration are Mr. Ford's home and estate; the stacks of his great plant at the Rogue are visible across the country; wide cement highways stretch away in every direction, and along them move thousands of motor cars, nearly half of which come from his own

factory; his genius has made them possible and necessary.

Henry Ford's success is due to industry and perseverance in the working out of an idea. He has always used his head; he has never been a quitter; he did not inherit opportunity or wealth; he discovered and claimed them both.

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